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INGS RETURN ROBS CHERRIES OF A WIN

Burnley hit back after opener by Rantie – see page 5



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Saints bound for Brazil

Pages 8/9



SUN-BURNED



SHOCKED: Adam Lallana, right, and Rickie Lambert, above, suffer as a chance goes begging.
Picture: Stuart Martin.

Saints dumped out of FA Cup by Sunderland

SAINTS were dumped out of a second cup competition this season by Sunderland as they put in a disappointing performance to lose 1-0.

Two much changed sides battled out a poor quality FA Cup fifth round match with Craig Gardner's strike four minutes into the second half the difference between the teams in a wet, windy and largely empty Stadium of Light.

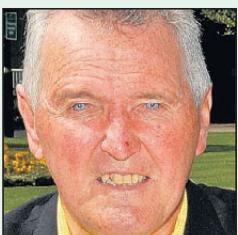
It meant Saints failed make it through to the quarter-finals and their eight game unbeaten run came to an end at the hands of a club who have knocked them out of both domestic cup competitions this season and twice held them to draws in the league.

• Full match report and pictures: Pages 2-3



FA CUP 5TH ROUND: SUNDERLAND 1 SAINTS 0 – Report and pictures inside

TERRY PAIN



Saints legend's EXCLUSIVE column

See page 7

SAINTS



Contrasting tale of Dani and Rickie

See pages 8.9

NON-LEAGUE



EIGHT pages of the best local coverage
See pages 26-33



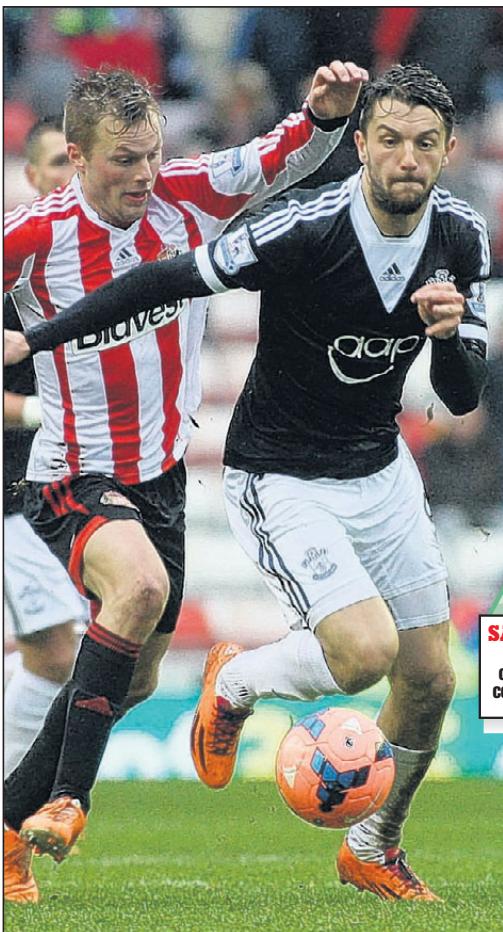
**MONEY BACK
ON ALL PRESTIGE WATCHES AND DIAMOND RINGS
IF SOUTHAMPTON WIN THE FA CUP**

World Renowned Celebrity Jeweller Kim Rose is trading at Scarletts Cornmarket Chambers, Romsey and the gold exchange Hanover buildings, Southampton

Saints Spotlight



MAKING A BREAK: Guly Do Prado, above, and substitute Jay Rodriguez, below, take it in turns to test out the Sunderland defence.



SUNDERLAND 1 SAINTS 0: Pochettino's team

SUNDERLAND ANOTHER CUP

SAINTS were dumped out of a second cup competition this season by Sunderland as they put in a disappointing performance to lose 1-0.

Two much changed sides battled out a poor quality FA Cup fifth round match with Craig Gardner's strike four minutes into the second half the difference between the teams in a wet, windy and largely empty Stadium of Light.

It meant Saints failed make it through to the quarter-finals and their eight-game unbeaten run came to an end at the hands of a club who have knocked them out of both domestic cup competitions this season and twice held them to draws in the league.

Saints were almost caught napping early in the game.

Sunderland didn't capitalise as a high free kick over the top found Ignacio Scocco ghosting in past Maya Yoshida but he couldn't control the dropping ball well enough to get a shot away.

It was the Black Cats who

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CHIEF SPORTS REPORTER

were on top in the opening stages but Saints who had the first genuinely good chance on 11 minutes.

Adam Lallana stood up a far post cross from the left that picked out Rickie Lambert.

He cushioned a perfectly guided header back into the path of James Ward-Prowse who from 12 yards out didn't connect cleanly with his shot and allowed Oscar Ustari to dive to his right to make a relatively comfortable save.

Sunderland had a penalty appeal waved away two minutes later as Fabio Borini went down just inside the right hand side of the box claiming he was tripped by Luke Shaw. Referee Mike Dean was having none of it though.

The game was certainly not a

thriller. Saints looked very sluggish throughout the side and a little uncertain at the back while Sunderland lacked confidence in the final third.

Yoshida became the first player in the book for a foul on Borini.

You always felt that Saints had the quality in the decisive areas of the field that Sunderland lacked but they needed to get something going.

Nathaniel Clyne tried to provide that with a thrusting run forward down the right but his dangerous looking low ball was cut out before it could do any real damage.

Lallana produced a piece of magic to get to the right by-line moments later but this time Ustari dived to block out the cut back.

Clyne threatened again on 38 minutes with a low ball from the right that went all the way across the area but Sunderland managed to get a touch to just divert away from the sliding Lambert at the far post.

Steven Davis was the next player to pick up a yellow card for a full blooded challenge through the back of Borini.

The fourth official held up the board to show one minute of stoppage time which didn't seem enough but there were few complaints as a dreary half of football played in the pouring rain was mercifully brought to an end.

The second half didn't start in a much brighter fashion, either, in terms of the football or the weather.

In fairness to both sides the heavy pitch and wet and windy conditions were hardly conducive to sparkling play.

Lallana always looked like he might be the one whose extra quality would provide an opening and he tried his luck from 25 yards out but it was well off target.

Four minutes into the half the deadlock was finally broken by a fine goal from Craig Gardner.

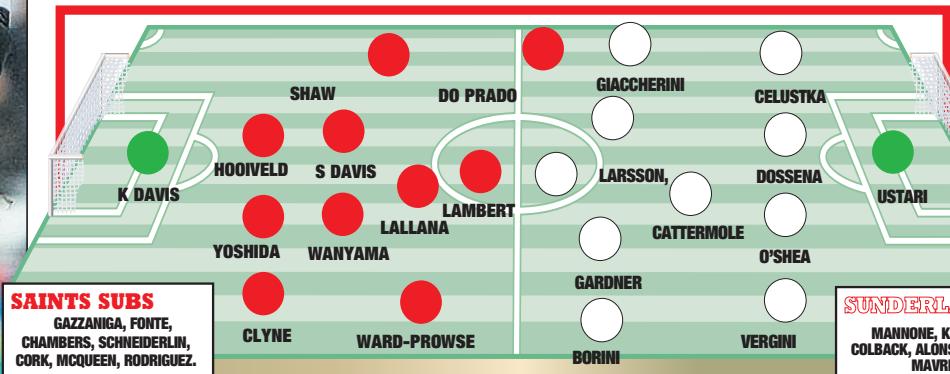
Jos Hooiveld failed to fully clear the ball and **GARDNER** stole in to win it and skipped past Victor Wanyama.

He unleashed a right-footed shot from 20 yards that bent away from Kelvin Davis diving full length to his right and dipped at just the right time, hitting the underside of the bar and crossing the line.

Saints were playing well below their best.

They were uncharacteristically slow and ponderous on the counter attack and were giving the ball away so cheaply in the final third.

Mauricio Pochettino had to make changes to give his side a chance and did just that on 62 minutes with Jay Rodriguez and Morgan Schneiderlin replacing Guly do Prado and James Ward-Prowse.



SAINTS SUBS

GAZZANIGA, FONTE,
CHAMBERS, SCHNEIDERLIN,
CORK, MCQUEEN, RODRIGUEZ.

THERE were a raft of changes for both sides as they shuffled their packs despite an FA Cup quarter-final place being on offer.

Mauricio Pochettino made six changes from the team that defeated Hull on Tuesday night but that was

TEAM NEWS

nothing compared to Sunderland who made nine changes from their last Premier League outing.

For Saints there were starts for Kelvin Davis, Nathaniel Clyne, Jos

Hooiveld, Victor Wanyama, James Ward-Prowse and Guly do Prado.

They replaced Artur Boruc, Calum Chambers, Jose Fonte, Morgan Schneiderlin, Jack Cork and Jay Rodriguez and there was a first place on the bench for 19-year-old Sam McQueen.

FOR ALL TODAY'S RESULTS AND LATEST TABLES: SEE PAGE 48

Saints Spotlight

not up to scratch against Black Cats once again

DELIVER KNOCKOUT



LEGWORK: Adam Lallana avoids a flailing arm to try to get in a tackle.

ATTACKING: Rickie Lambert on the run.

That meant Steven Davis pushing into a more attacking role in what was a regular attacking trio consisting of the Northern Ireland skipper, Lallana and Rodriguez playing off of Lambert with Schneiderlin and Wanyama sitting in front of the back four.

Sunderland responded with Connor Wickham coming on for Scocco.

It almost paid dividends as well as Wickham had the chance to put the tie beyond Saints, presented with a great chance on 74 minutes.

Seb Larsson played in a beauty of a ball from the right that found Wickham in behind the back four and on the edge of the six yard box.

He stuck out a leg but failed to even get a meaningful touch on it, however, and Kelvin Davis was able to gather the ball.

Larsson had a go himself moments later, from 20 yards, but, though he struck his shot well, it was straight into the arms of Kelvin Davis.

Sunderland made another change with Valentin Roberge replacing Andrea Dossena on 77 minutes.

The game was opening up as Saints pushed forward and you almost wondered whether it might yet be their day, purely based on Sunderland having failed to put

them away.

They did create an opportunity to level on 80 minutes as Clyne fired in a low cross from the right that picked out Lallana at the near post

but he put it wide.

Perhaps it wasn't going to be Saints' day as, with eight minutes remaining, Clyne crossed from the right and found Lambert three yards out.

However, the ball bounced up just in front of him and unbelievably it went over the bar.

Both sides made a final switch with Sam McQueen coming on for debut for Lallana and Jack Colback, replacing Gardner for Sunderland.

Wickham broke quickly for Sunderland but ignored two free players ahead of him and dragged a shot across goal and wide.

Kelvin Davis made a superb late save diving to his right to save from Borini after he was found in the area by a square ball from Colback.

Rodriguez and Larsson picked up late bookings as Sunderland saw out the time and knocked Saints out of the FA Cup for another year.

PICTURES
by Stuart Martin



SLIPPERY: Nathaniel Clyne avoids a challenge.

Perez sticks up for Saints

JESUS Perez defended Saints' team selection and performance as they were knocked out of the FA Cup at Sunderland.

Mauricio Pochettino made six changes to the side that defeated in Hull in midweek.

Sunderland made nine changes in a game Gus Poyet had admitted he would rather lose than draw, but the Black Cats still proved too strong for a lacklustre Saints.

There has already been inevitable criticism of Pochettino's tactics with his team stuck in upper midtable in the league and missing out on the chance to win through to the FA Cup quarter-finals in a draw that appeared to be opening up.

Assistant manager Perez defended not only the team selection but also the performance, saying he was not disappointed, just "a little sad" about the 1-0 defeat courtesy of



KEEPING THE FAITH:
Fans urge on Saints at the Stadium of Light.

Craig Gardner's second half strike.

He said: "We played the best team we decide to play."

"We assess our players, we know how they are, we know which problems each other got from the last game and we decide the best team to play."

"I repeat again we trust every single player we have in our squad."

"Our squad is not depth in this moment so we have a lot of young people from the under-21s so we are not disappointed, just a little sad to be out of the FA Cup because we tried to move forward."

"It wasn't possible to stay in the next round but we protect and we support all our squad."

He added: "We are not disappointed for nothing as a team, as players."

"They tried to do the best and we couldn't especially first half because Sunderland played with energy and a little bit different if we review the last game we played here in the Premier League."

"They stopped us better and I think in the second half we conceded a simple goal."

"In the last 15-20 minutes we had chances enough to equalise the game."

Saints Spotlight



MISS: Adam Lallana sees a Saints chance go begging and, below, Steven Davis on the ball.



Gordon Simpson
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SPORTS REPORTER

WHAT a wasted opportunity this was for Saints.

On a miserable afternoon at the Stadium of Light, the dream of a first FA Cup success since 1976 died for another year.

Many will feel that it needn't have done so, either.

For the first time since they reached the final of this competition in 2003, there was a sense that the stars might just be aligning for the club.

Saints are an extremely strong team now; one of the best in the country.

They have been in fine form, and are a side that need to be taken extremely seriously by anyone, anywhere.

Couple that with so many big-name teams exiting this season's FA Cup, and you had something approaching the perfect recipe.

Yet everything fell flat here in Sunderland, and the 859 fans who made the trip from the south coast will not have been happy with what they witnessed.

It is clear to see already that Mauricio Pochettino's decision to make six changes from the team that won at Hull on Tuesday has not gone down well.

The Saints boss did field a number of his regular starters, but this was certainly not the club's strongest line-up.

With a chance of winning a first serious piece of silverware in 38 years, it is justifiable to ask 'Why wasn't it?'

After all, isn't the point of football winning trophies? Yes, it is important that Saints finish the Premier League campaign strongly and



ACTION: Saints scramble away a Sunderland attack.

continue to improve, but they are in an excellent position already.

There seemed no reason not to go all-out for the FA Cup as well.

Given the choice, what would you prefer: A seventh-place finish and no trophy, or ninth and an FA Cup?

That is terribly simplistic, of

course, and there is absolutely no guarantee what Saints would have done in the competition had they advanced here.

But the point is that chances like this traditionally do not come along for clubs like Saints all that often. When they do, it is surely important

to try and grasp them as best you can.

That is certainly how the fans will view it, and the feelings of frustration among supporters will only heighten tomorrow if Sunderland draw a lower league team at home in the last eight.

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Saints Spotlight

MISSED...



In truth, Saints did put out a strong enough team to win – even if they didn't put out one that would maximise their chances. Sunderland themselves made nine changes from their last league side, and with a Capital One Cup final and Premier League survival still on

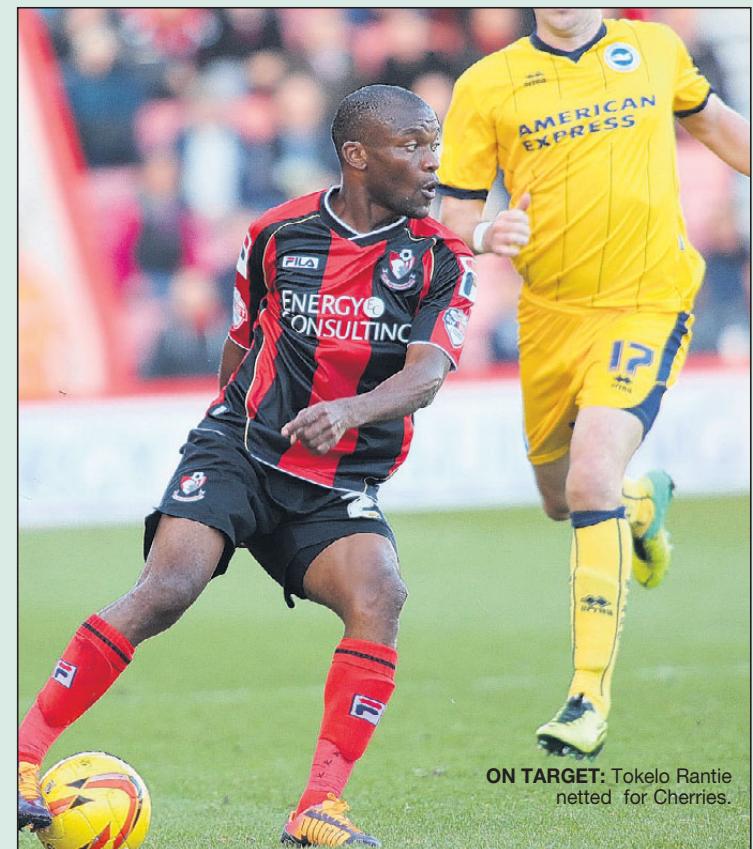
the agenda for them, the FA Cup is far down their list of priorities. Even their supporters had little interest in this fixture, with more than 32,000 empty seats.

Saints could not take advantage, though, and that makes it all the more frustrating. It also makes it

something that they might very well now come to regret.



SKIP: Jay Rodriguez jumps over a tackle in Saints' clash at the Stadium of Light today.



ON TARGET: Tokelo Rantie netted for Cherries.

Cherries are held by Burnley once again

CHERRIES shared the points with Championship high-fliers Burnley for the second time this season as the teams battled out a 1-1 draw at Dean Court today.

Tokelo Rantie, who had scored in Cherries' 1-1 draw at Turf Moor in November, repeated the feat when he netted with a glancing header after 51 minutes.

But Keith Treacy came off the bench to equalise for the visitors after 67 minutes, converting a deflected cross from fellow substitute Ross Wallace.

Striker Rantie was restored to the Cherries starting line-up as boss Eddie Howe made one change, with Andrew Surman dropping to the bench.

Cherries goalkeeper Lee Camp was pressed into action after five minutes, the stopper clutching Michael Kightly's cross-shot at his near post.

Tom Heaton saved comfortably after Cherries defender Steve Cook had tried his luck with a speculative effort from 30 yards before Simon Francis intercepted Dean Marney's dangerous cross.

Defender Francis fashioned the only real noteworthy chance of the first half, his thunderous drive from 30 yards snuffed by Heaton after 20 minutes.

Clarets defender Jason Shackell threw himself in front of Rantie to block after the South Africa international had let fly following a promising move from Cherries.

Cherries had a scare after Harry Arter had missed his kick in the middle of the pitch but, after Kightly had threatened

to capitalise, Eunan O'Kane was on hand to save the day.

As a first half of few goalscoring chances drew to a close, Cherries were forced into a reshuffle when O'Kane was replaced on the stroke of half-time by Shaun MacDonald.

Cherries broke the deadlock six minutes into the second half when Rantie met Harte's corner with a glancing header, the 24-year-old registering his third goal of the season.

Burnley appealed in vain for a penalty with Sam Vokes claiming his flick had been handled by MacDonald, although referee Graham Scott was having none of it.

The Clarets levelled midway through the second half when substitutes Ross Wallace and Treacy combined to unlock the Cherries defence.

Treacy fired home at the far post after Wallace's deflected cross had fallen invitingly for him.

Grabban burst through after 73 minutes but saw his effort from a tight angle turned past the post by Heaton before the goalkeeper tipped Tommy Elphick's header over the crossbar.

Yann Kermorgant, on as a 70th-minute replacement for Rantie, headed narrowly past the post from a Ritchie centre before the Frenchman lifted a free kick over the top.

Francis was denied late on when his thumping drive clipped the crossbar before Ritchie's effort was clutched by Heaton diving at his near post in the final minute.

BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

BY DAREN WHEELER

Will clubs allow a return to terraces?

SAFE standing has once again hit the headlines, this time with top flight clubs apparently looking to introduce it.

In my own humble opinion it's long overdue.

I thought that the moment I read the story whilst stood for 45 minutes on a train travelling at 100 miles an hour en route to work.

Yes, once upon a time football terraces were a dangerous place to be, no doubt aided by the fact that they were surrounded by high metal fences that kept fans in like caged animals.

I've lost count of the amount of articles I've written about safe standing and the place it has in the modern game.

If the Bundesliga have terraces and they have worked for years without any issue, just why haven't they made their way across the Channel to the UK?

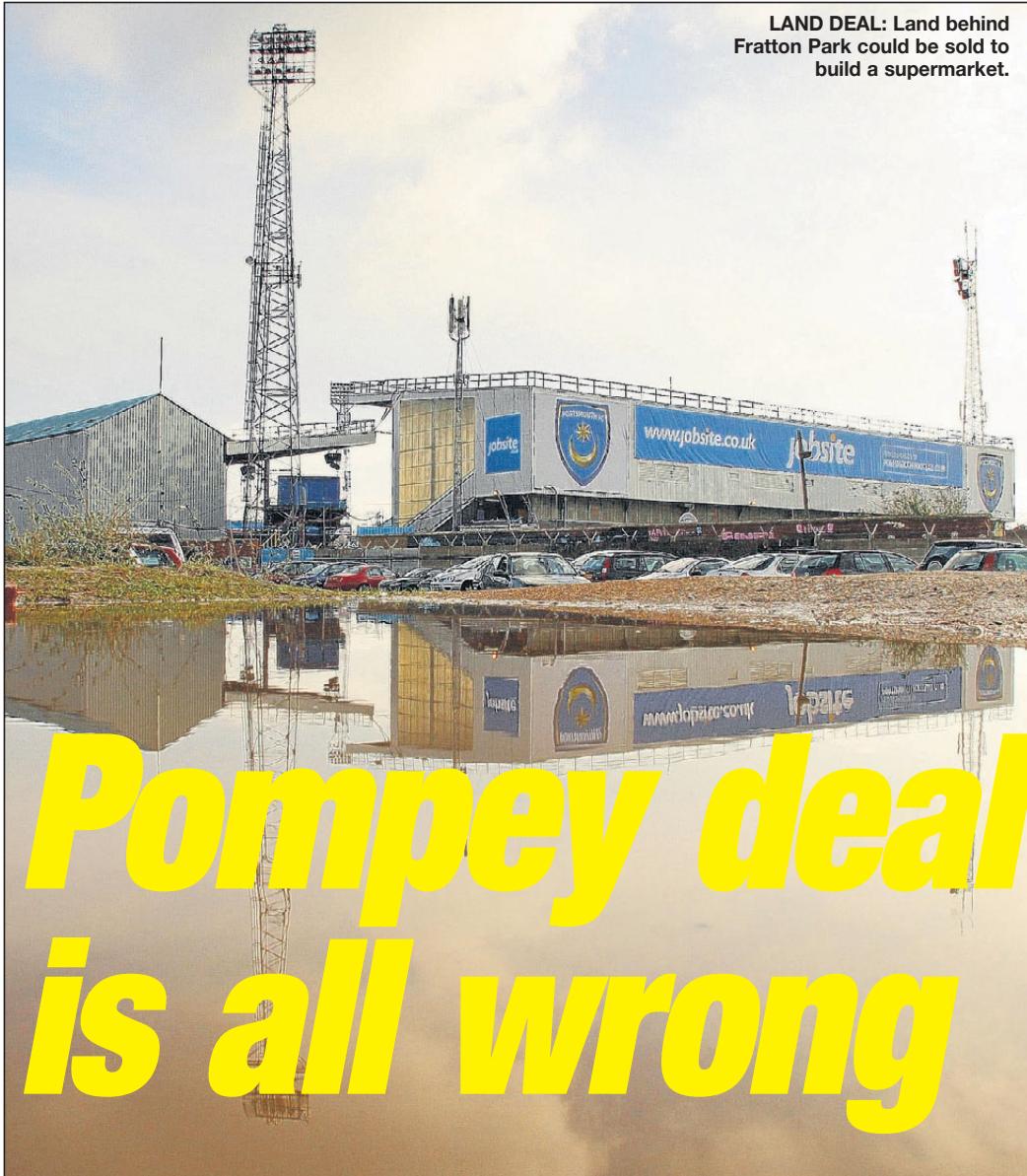
It could be down to cost. After all, would you pay the same to stand as you would to sit?

Either way, safe standing areas should not be a cause of concern.

As I said, if the train companies can pack customer in on trains travelling at speed then surely, in this day of modern technology, we can find a way of allowing football fans to stand at a football ground for 90 minutes.

The long and the short of it is safe standing is more than possible, but will most likely never happen.

All seater stadiums work and there's no way on God's green earth any football club will take out seats, put in standing areas, at a cost, and then sell tickets for said area at lower price. It just won't happen.



Pompey deal is all wrong

LAND DEAL: Land behind Fratton Park could be sold to build a supermarket.

THERE comes a time when no matter how little you think of someone you feel that little slither of sympathy that reminds you that you're human.

I'm no monster. Over the last few years, amongst the many, many laughs I've had Portsmouth FC's expense, there have been moments of real sympathy, especially for those true fans who support their team week in, week out.

However there does come a time when you cannot resist the inclination to stick the boot in, and the announcement that Pompey had come to an agreement with Tesco for some of the land at Fratton Park is one of those moments. The club, now owned by Pompey Supporters' Trust, is backing proposals for the 5,500 sq m (59,200 sq ft) development behind the Fratton End on Fratton Way.

Money from the scheme will be used to carry out improvement

works at the club, which spent 14 months in administration. Now, part of you may say that's great, some good news for the blue few. I won't and I'll explain why.

Portsmouth FC are currently paying back in excess of £100,000 per month to ex-players. In real terms that's the equivalent of 5,000 home tickets every month. With 23 home games a year that means for every home gate of 15,000 in real terms the revenue they get is the equivalent of 12,500... that's assuming that every one of those 15,000 fans is paying £25 and not some discounted ticket price for being a "shareholder".

With that part of the debt in mind, take into account the cash flow of a new Tesco at Fratton Park. Would you expect the club to perhaps start paying back some debt owed to local businesses and the tax payers? To the best of my knowledge, the club has yet to make any kind of a dent in that debt.

And yet, with that debt sat there unpaid for what, 3 years, the club

now intends to plough cash into renovating Fratton Park.

Am I alone in thinking that particular action is actually pretty shameful?

It smacks of "Wah! hey! We got some money, forget what we owe, let's spend some!" A mentality that, quite frankly, got them into the mess they find themselves in today.

For most of us with any kind of moral compass, that money from Tesco should go towards paying off what they owe, not some new pie in the sky venture.

In fact, when you look at it, is it not extremely crass to not pay back what you owe to local businesses with money from a venture that will actually adversely affect local businesses? Does anyone on Pompey's new board think that a new Tesco's will actually aid small local businesses or detract trade from them? If they do detract from those small local businesses then it's one hell of a kick in the teeth for the Fratton business community.

Pai:

The Saints legend

THIS week Tom Cleverley gave an interview to a leading UK tabloid newspaper, to which he stated that in his opinion, he was being made a "scapegoat" for Manchester United's shortcomings this season.

The interview has generated a lot of attention, particularly from the usual social media sites.

Some fans have supported the column, whilst others have condemned it.

In terms of the qualities of Cleverley's game, it has been mentioned by his supporters that he has good energy, can run and gets about the pitch well.

However, these qualities are surely the minimum requirement for any midfield player to possess, particularly a Premier League midfielder and particularly a Manchester United midfielder player.

Likewise, an ability to keep possession and move the ball quickly and efficiently, is also a minimum requirement of a central midfielder at one of the biggest clubs in world football.

Cleverley can keep possession – a 90 per cent pass completion rate this season proves that.

However, with an average passing distance of just 17 metres, a mere eight chances created and not one single assist in 16 starts and five appearances from the bench show the real quality of that 90 per cent pass completion rate.

Frustratingly enough, these are statistics which Cleverley himself may be content with as he referred to Spanish football and how "if they pass the ball sideways but keep possession, the fans clap them".

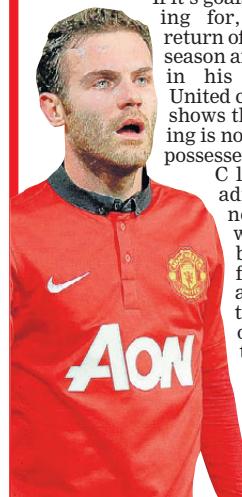
Whilst there is a greater emphasis on retaining possession in La Liga, there is as much an emphasis on penetration of the play by the player in possession.

Some of the most creative players in the Premier League have all plied their trade in La Liga with great success. Silva, Cazorla, Mata (pictured below), Ozil, Fabregas, etc. All of whom have played in both La Liga and the Premier League and all of whom can retain possession not only by "passing sideways" but by being productive with it in an offensive capacity when the moment presents itself.

If it's goals you're looking for, Cleverley's return of one goal this season and three in 44 in his Manchester United career overall shows that goal scoring is not a quality he possesses either.

Cleverley admits: "I am not a player who's going to beat three or four people and stick it in the top corner or go round tackling people like Roy Keane."

A look at Cleverley's midfield teammates



ne's World

l's **EXCLUSIVE** column on all things football



NOT FAIR TO PIN UNITED WOES ON TOM



KEY MAN: Tom Cleverley (above) and fellow Manchester United midfielders Michael Carrick (right) and Juan Mata (left).

Michael Carrick and Darren Fletcher will show two players who are also incapable of producing such moments on a football field.

However, Carrick has shown an ability to pass incisively with either foot, an ability to detect a threat and make interceptions, a brilliant reader of the game and a player who on occasions can even dictate the tempo of a game.

Fletcher in his day was tenacious, albeit without the ferocity of Roy Keane, but he also had the knack of scoring important goals in important games.

These are qualities which have made both Carrick and Fletcher

Manchester United footballers but it is difficult to find the qualities which have class Cleverley in the same bracket.

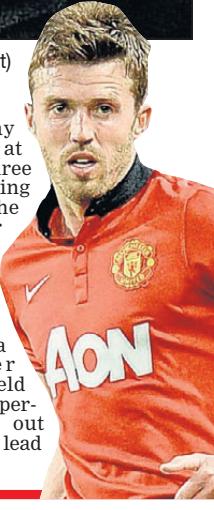
It is without question unfair to blame Tom Cleverley for all that has gone wrong at Old Trafford this season.

However, the theory that United seem to do significantly better with him in the team than without him is also a flawed perception as a closer look shows that of United's ten defeats in all competitions this season, Tom Cleverley has started in six.

Of the four he missed, three of those were against Man City and

Chelsea away and Everton at home, three clubs all flying high in the Premier League.

Tom Cleverley is not a scapegoat, he is a sheep in a Manchester United midfield which is desperately crying out for a wolf to lead them.



Spurs can get into top four...

WITH the plaudits flowing in for Liverpool and the doom-mongers fixing their attention on Manchester United, Tottenham have been able to coast along under the radar for much of the season.

Just one victory outside of the top four, Spurs have gone about their work with very little in the way of fanfare. Sure, they haven't shown the finesse and grace of some of the more fancied Champions League challengers but their ruthless efficiency under the guidance of Tim Sherwood has them nipping at the heels of the prize horses leading the race.

At the outset of the season the top four was the objective for then manager Andre Villas-Boas. The Portuguese had been given the money from Gareth Bale's record transfer fee to reinvest in the squad and he duly obliged, signing a host of talented individuals.

However, Spurs stuttered from one performance to the next, struggling for goals from their array of new attacking acquisitions.

In truth when the axe fell on AVB's head in mid-December few were shocked. A 5-0 massacre at the hands of fellow Champions League chasers Liverpool was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back. What did surprise was their decision to replace the Portuguese with Tim

Sherwood – a loyal servant of the club but hardly the managers that Spurs have gone for previously. That Sherwood was signed on an 18-month contract was even more unexpected, when a caretaker role seemed the best he could hope for.

His first act as manager was to reinstate Emmanuel Adebayor in the starting line-up, and what a decision it has proved to be. There remains that theory that Adebayor performs only when he is placed in the shop window. It's one that certainly has its foundations, but who cares if his goals should fire his side into the Champions League.

His brace in Spurs' dismantling of a pathetic Newcastle team put him onto nine goals in the 12 league games since Sherwood's appointment.

Brought back in from the cold,

the Togolese international has shown why he was once one of the most coveted strikers in the league.

Watching Spurs on Wednesday they were a far cry from the beleaguered bunch that were run ragged at White Hart Lane by Liverpool in December.

This was a team high on confidence that stroked the ball around the park and at times were quite exhilarating to watch.

Adebayor battled away up front with renewed vigour, while Moussa Dembele, Paulinho and the ever-improving Nabil Bentaleb simply bossed the midfield. It was their first win at St James' Park since 2004 and with a performance like that, you wonder just why it took so long.

It was yet another away win, their sixth in seven matches since their thrashing at The Etihad. Their recent draw at Hull is the only blot on that almost perfect record.

Of course, questions remain for Sherwood and his team. They may have only one less victory than Liverpool, but they have scored 30 goals less than the Merseysiders.

In fact, even Manchester United with all their problems have managed more goals than Spurs. It is a problem that was not addressed during January, with no new acquisitions to speak of. Sherwood spoke of the need for quality over quantity, but should



EMMANUEL ADEBAYOR

Adebayor finds himself nursing an injury, he'll have to call on Roberto Soldado who has proven an unmitigated flop since his move from La Liga.

Perhaps he will be given a chance to rediscover his form in the Europa League, a competition that might prove an unwelcome distraction in their pursuit of fourth place. With games against Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool coming up the last thing they need is the fatigue associated with Thursday night fixtures.

It will be those three meetings that determine their season and the fate of their manager.

Fourth place is still the aim, despite the mid-season upheaval, and without a solid haul of points from those fixtures Spurs might just end up once again as the also rans.

Saints Spotlight

Roy's happy to leave the decision on foreign stars to the FA

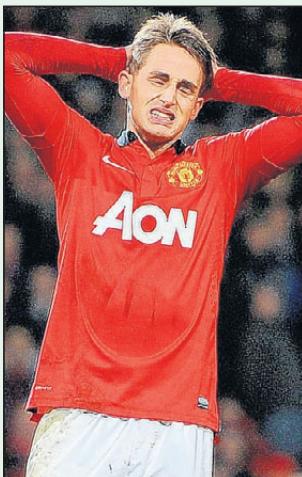
ENGLAND boss Roy Hodgson will leave it up to the FA board to decide whether foreign-born players like Adnan Januzaj should play for England.

Januzaj, pictured below, has enjoyed a stellar season with Manchester United but the 19-year-old is yet to pledge his allegiance to one country at international level.

The forward is certainly not short of options. He can play for his country of birth – Belgium – and either Albania, Turkey or Kosovo through his parents.

England are also interested. Januzaj would have to wait until 2018 to play for the Three Lions, although that idea is complicated by the fact that the Home Nations have opted out of FIFA's residency rules.

Hodgson is a fan of Januzaj, but he will leave it up to the FA to decide whether it wants to try to pursue the player.



"All I can say is that it's a matter for the FA Board because it raises a lot of issues," the England manager said.

"Until such time as the FA board have it very clear what their policy is going to be, is it going to be simply following FIFA dictates or slightly different in some way, all I can do is wait and see."

"But the one thing you have to understand with Januzaj whichever way England decide to go, with the way the rules are at the moment, there's no way he can play for England for the next few years."

Januzaj, who speaks little English, is thought to be assessing his options before deciding which national team he wants to pledge his allegiance to.

Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere caused controversy last year when he claimed the idea of seeing the likes of Januzaj play for England made him uncomfortable.

Wilshere told a press conference last October: "The only people who should play for England are English people... If you live in England for five years it doesn't make you English."

Wilshere later claimed his quotes were taken out of context.

Last summer Brazil-born striker Diego Costa committed himself to playing for Spain, where he plays with Atletico Madrid.

Simon Carter

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SPORTS EDITOR

THE COUNTDOWN IS WELL AND TRULY ON FOR PLACES IN ROY HODGSON'S WORLD CUP SQUAD FOR BRAZIL.

There is only one more friendly – against Denmark on March 5 – before the England manager selects his provisional squad for this summer's South American jamboree.

Around the Premier League, managers are touting their players as ones that Hodgson and his assistant Ray Lewington must take a close look at.

Recently, they have been in luck.

Hodgson was at Craven Cottage earlier this month to see Saints trio Rickie Lambert, Adam Lallana and Jay Rodriguez all score in a 3-0 victory at Fulham.

Since all three appeared at some point in the November internationals against Chile and Germany at Wembley, their form has been impressive.

Of the trio, Rodriguez's World Cup hopes appear to be the slenderest.

He didn't do himself justice on his international debut against Chile, but his club form since has been superb.

With eight strikes in 17 league and cup outings since the Chile game, Rodriguez has emerged as Saints' most lethal threat in front of goal.

Both Lambert and Lallana's goal ratios have improved since England last played.

Lambert has struck five times in his last 15 Saints games, compared to three in 11 prior to coming on as a sub against Germany.

Compare well

And Lallana has netted five times in Saints' last 17 games, showing scintillating form at times that has led Dell legend Terry Paine to claim he is a certainty for the plane to Brazil.

Those scoring figures certainly compare well to England shoe-ins like Wayne Rooney (four goals in 12 games since England last played) and Danny Welbeck (six goals in 15 matches).

While at Craven Cottage on February 1, Hodgson would also have seen Luke Shaw put in another fine display.

He this week indicated Shaw could feature against Denmark, having spoken privately with Saints manager Mauricio Pochettino about the player's development.

Since England lost 1-0 to Germany on November 19, Andy Carroll has finally returned to action.

With nine caps to his name, he is the main rival to Lambert's hopes of a sensational World Cup finals appearance.

It is impossible to imagine Hodgson selecting both, and equally unlikely he won't pick either of them.



SAINTS SET



ENGLAND HOPES:
Rickie Lambert (above),
Jay Rodriguez (main
pic), Luke Shaw (right)
and Adam Lallana (left)
could all be in England's
World Cup squad.

At 25, Carroll is seven years younger than his Saints rival. But Lambert has form on his side, and he has not let England

down in his four appearances which have brought two goals (the same international tally as Carroll).

Suspension has ruled Carroll out of going head to head with Lambert at Upton Park next weekend.

The debate as to whether the Saint or the Hammer deserves to go to Brazil is one that could take up a

fair few hours.

It is amazing to think that we are talking about four Saints players in with a chance of playing in a World Cup finals.

The last time the tournament was held, Saints had just finished seventh in the third division.

That is the scale of the club's

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Saints Spotlight

FOR BRAZIL



achievement, and the magnitude of the journey the likes of Lambert and Lallana have been on.

Sounds like the X-Factor, doesn't it, talk of journeys?

In four years time, though, it could be even better.

Is it beyond the realms of possibility that in Russia in 2018 an England

squad could include Lallana, Rodriguez, Luke Shaw, Nathaniel Clyne, Calum Chambers, James Ward-Prowse, Jack Cork and Sam Gallagher?

Is it, really?

All those players might not be at Saints in 2018, but they could be in the England frame. They would all

be in their 20s and, for

Johnson after he was sidelined by injury. Prior to that, he was also utilised on the left of defence. *Cont on page 10*

some, in the prime of their life.

And don't forget ex-Saints pair Theo Walcott and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain could also still be around the international scene.

Saints, though, are not the only Premier League club promoting young(ish) English talent.

Liverpool boss Brendan Rodgers believes Anfield could become a breeding ground for future internationals.

He has tipped young right back Jon Flanagan to be the next for a call-up, but thinks Hodgson should take a closer look at those who are likely to be on the plane to Brazil this summer.

Captain for club and country Steven Gerrard has now got a handle on the holding role outlined for him by Rodgers while Jordan Henderson and Daniel Sturridge have been excellent all season.

In addition, Raheem Sterling has suddenly hit a rich vein of form.

Add Flanagan to the mix and Rodgers believes he has a core of English players who are more than capable of playing the sort of football which will allow the national team to compete with their rivals.

Lewington was present to watch last Saturday's 5-1 demolition of Arsenal and while he could not have failed to have been impressed by the performances of Flanagan, Sterling and Henderson in particular, Rodgers felt it would be an idea for Hodgson to pay a visit sooner rather than later.

Trusted lieutenant

"Ray is a trusted lieutenant for Roy and I am sure he will know the level these players are playing at," said Rodgers.

"Jordan Henderson has shown his tactical development, maturity and leadership qualities while Raheem Sterling, for a kid of that age (19) to be playing at the level he is, with invention, speed and scoring a couple of goals in a big game, has been absolutely outstanding.

"Sturridge speaks for himself, he'll get goals.

"His transformation from being a Chelsea reserve player to being what I consider to be the number nine for England for a World Cup is a good signal for, especially young British players, that if you come to Liverpool you will get your opportunity if your focus is right."

Sturridge is an absolute shoe-in for an England start in the World Cup if he carries on his 2013/14 form.

Since returning from a month out through injury, he has netted in six successive games and now has 19 goals in 23 matches this season.

Flanagan, a 21-year-old academy graduate, has been deputising for established England right-back Glen

Johnson after he was sidelined by injury. Prior to that, he was also utilised on the left of defence. *Cont on page 10*

Hodgson: No place for Terry

ROY Hodgson made a concerted effort to end any talk of John Terry coming out of international retirement when he addressed the press this week.

Terry's form has been so good this year that Gary Lineker, among others, called for the Chelsea skipper to come back to the international fold.

Hodgson has become irritated on previous occasions when the prospect of Terry playing for England again was raised.

The England manager had the same problem two years ago when he was constantly quizzed about the idea of Rio Ferdinand returning to the fold, so an attempt was made on Wednesday to nip any talk of a Terry return in the bud.

"The door isn't open (for Terry) because he has retired from international football," the England boss said.

"John has retired and as far as I am concerned that is the situation."

Terry has enjoyed something of a renaissance since Jose Mourinho came back to Stamford Bridge.

His partnership with Gary Cahill has been particularly pleasing for the Chelsea boss and the club's fans.

But just to be clear on the matter, Hodgson offered a firm rebuttal when the idea of Terry, pictured, returning was raised for a second time in a media briefing at Wembley.

"As far as I am concerned retirement is retirement," Hodgson said. "You respect that when players retire, we move on."

"We moved on after our first qualification game when John Terry limped off and since that time we have chosen the players who are available who have represented us well in my opinion so we will continue with that."

"That is not to say he is not a good player and he is not playing well at the moment. Everyone knows he is, but he is in retirement and that is the end of the matter as far as I am concerned."

Another Chelsea player who has found his international future the subject of much talk recently has been Ashley Cole.

Cole has been an almost certain selection for club and country for the best part of the last decade, but Hodgson concedes the 33-year-old is now facing stiff competition from Leighton Baines and Southampton prospect Luke Shaw.

"It's a bit of a problem when you are a full back - you either play or you are an understudy," Hodgson said.

"For years people have been under-study to Ashley. Now it's Ashley's turn to sit back, but we know what Ashley can do. We know how fit he keeps himself, how experienced he is. I certainly wouldn't write Ashley Cole out of any plans because he wasn't playing in his club team. But he will have to accept like everyone else that there is competition for his place in the international team."

Saints Spotlight

SAINTS' FIRST TEAM FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2013/14



AUGUST		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Sat 17 West Brom		(A)	W 1-0	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse***	Lallana*	Rodriguez**	Ramirez*	S Davis**
Sat 24 Sunderland		(H)	D 1-0	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw*	Wanyama	Schneiderlin**	W-Prowse	Lallana**	Rodriguez	Clyne*	Cork***
Tue 27 Barnsley (CCC 2) ..		(A)	W 5-1	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Fox	Wanyama	S Davis 2	Isgrave*	Ramirez 1	Rodriguez**	Osvaldo**	Ramirez***
Sat 31 Norwich		(A)	L 0-1	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Fox	Wanyama	Schneiderlin**	W-Prowse	Osvaldo***	Rodriguez	S Davis**	Sinclair***
SEPTEMBER															
Sun 15 West Ham		(H)	D 0-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw**	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	Rodriguez	Lallana*	Lambert 1	W-Prowse*	Cork***
Sat 21 Liverpool		(A)	W 1-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren 1	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	Rodriguez***	Lallana**	Lambert	S Davis*	Rowe***
Tues 24 Bristol City (CCC 3) (H)			W 2-0	K Davis	Chambers	Yoshida	Hooiveld 1	Fox	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	Ramirez 1	Lambert* Lee*	Rodriguez*	Ramirez***
Sat 28 Crystal Palace		(H)	W 2-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis*	Osvaldo 1	Lambert**	W-Prowse*	Ramirez***
OCTOBER															
Sat 5 Swansea		(H)	W 2-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Fox	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis***	Osvaldo*	Lallana 1	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez** 1
Sat 19 Man United		(A)	D 1-1	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama***	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Osvaldo	Lambert	Lambert* Do Prado*	Do Prado***
Sat 26 Fulham		(H)	W 2-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse**	Ramirez 1	Lambert 1	Rodriguez** Cork*	Do Prado***
NOVEMBER															
Sat 2 Stoke		(A)	D 1-1	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida 1	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	Rodriguez 1	Lallana	Ramirez*
Wed 6 Sunderland (CCC 4) ..(A)			L 1-2	K Davis	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Fox	Cork	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Ramirez***	Lallana 1	W-Prowse*	Gallagher***
Sat 9 Hull		(H)	W 4-1	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Hooiveld	Shaw	Wanyama*	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	Rodriguez 1	Rodriguez	S Davis*	Cork***
Sat 23 Arsenal		(A)	L 0-2	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte		Shaw*	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse**	Rodriguez	Lambert**	Ramirez**	Oswaldo**
DECEMBER															
Sun 1 Chelsea		(A)	L 1-3	Boruc*	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez 1	Lallana	Ramirez*	Gallagher***
Wed 4 Aston Villa		(H)	L 2-3	Gazzaniga	Clyne***	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama**	Schneiderlin***	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez 1	Lambert	W-Prowse*	Lambert***
Sat 7 Manchester City		(H)	D 1-1	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez 1	Oswaldo*	Cork*	Fonte***
Sat 14 Newcastle		(A)	D 1-1	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Fonte	Hooiveld	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez 1	Oswaldo*	Ramirez**	Reed***
Sat 21 Tottenham		(H)	L 2-3	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Fox***	Cork*	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez 1	Lambert	Ramirez**	Gallagher***
Thu 26 Cardiff		(A)	W 3-0	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse**	Rodriguez 2	Lambert 1	Ramirez**	Gallagher***
Sun 29 Everton		(A)	L 1-2	K Davis	Chambers***	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Cork*	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse**	Rodriguez	Lambert 1***	Ramirez 1	Clyne***
JANUARY															
Wed 1 Chelsea		(H)	L 0-3	K Davis	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw*	Cork**	Schneiderlin	S Davis***	Lallana	Rodriguez 1	Gazzaniga*	S Davis**
Sat 4 Burnley (FAC 3) ..(H)			W 4-3	K Davis	Clyne 1	Fonte	Hooiveld***	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Rodriguez 1	Lambert	Osvaldo* 1	Cork**
Sat 11 West Brom		(H)	W 1-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Cork*	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez 1	Oswaldo*	Ramirez**	Reed***
Sat 18 Sunderland		(A)	D 2-2	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren*** 1	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse**	Rodriguez 1	Lambert	Lallana*	Schneiderlin**
Sat 25 Yeovil (FAC 4) ..(H)			W 2-0	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte 1	Yoshida	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse***	Rodriguez 1	Lambert 1	Ramirez**	Gallagher***
Tue 28 Arsenal		(H)	D 2-2	Boruc	Chambers			Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse**	Rodriguez	Lambert 1***	Ramirez 1	Clyne***
FEBRUARY															
Sat 1 Fulham		(A)	W 3-0	Boruc	Chambers**	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Wanyama*	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Lallana 1	Rodriguez***	Lambert**	W-Prowse***
Sat 8 Stoke		(H)	D 2-2	Boruc	Clyne*	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	S Davis 1	Rodriguez	Lambert 1	Lallana** 1	Fonte***
Tue 11 Hull		(A)	W 1-0	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	S Davis***	Rodriguez	Lambert 1	Do Prado**	Do Prado***
Sat 15 Sunderland (FAC 5) ..(A)															Yoshida***
Sat 22 West Ham		(A)													Reed***
MARCH															
Sat 1 Liverpool		(H)													
Sat 8 Crystal Palace		(A)													
Sat 15 Norwich		(H)													
Sat 22 Tottenham		(A)													
Sat 29 Newcastle		(H)													
APRIL															
Sat 5 Manchester City		(A)													
Sat 12 Cardiff		(H)													
Sat 19 Aston Villa		(A)													
Sat 26 Everton		(H)													
MAY															
Sat 3 Swansea		(A)													
Sun 11 Man United		(H)													

from page 9

Rodgers believes that tactical flexibility makes him a candidate to replace Johnson in the national team, although he admits this summer's World Cup may come too soon for the youngster.

"It might come too soon for him this year but he has all the qualities to play in that position," said the Reds boss.

"Glen Johnson is in there and Kyle Walker (of Tottenham) has been a regular but if you are playing for a club like Liverpool at the age of 20 and you are producing the performances he has done I think he has shown the potential.

"The key for Jon is consistency, making sure he doesn't think he has cracked it."

"I have been pleasantly surprised by how tactically good he was playing against (Santi) Cazorla at the weekend if he can do that here in these types of games he can do it at international level."

Flanagan has appeared 11 times for Liverpool this season, but Saints' own home-produced right-back Calum Chambers has played even more matches.

The Saints academy product, who only turned 19 last month, has appeared in 17 league and cup games in 2013/14.

Hodgson names his squad for the Denmark friendly on February 27.

Apart from all those already mentioned, Sunderland winger Adam Johnson has a chance of making it.

His timing is impeccable after a long-term knee injury ruled ex-Saint Theo Walcott out of the World Cup.

After scoring seven times in eight games – including one against Saints in a 2-2 league draw – Johnson was watched by Hodgson at home to Hull last weekend.

For once, he did not score – Sunderland losing 2-0 – but Hodgson's presence will not have done his confidence any harm.

Johnson, who has 12 caps, has not

played for England since a 2-1 victory over Italy in August 15, 2012.

He has been named on stand-by lists for the 2010 World Cup under Fabio Capello and Euro 2012 under Hodgson but has not made it to a tournament.

The England boss also got to have a close look at Hull trio Tom Huddlestone, Curtis Davies and Jake Livermore last weekend.

Tigers boss Steve Bruce believes all three should be in contention for the plane to Brazil.

Huddlestone has won four England caps – the last of them in the summer of 2010 – while fellow midfielder Livermore won his sole England cap in the game where Johnson last featured.

Centre-back Davies, a bargain £2.25m signing from Birmingham last summer, is uncapped.

Another former Saints academy starlet, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, could also fea-

ture in the Denmark squad.

Sidelined through injury for the November internationals, the 20-year-old recently scored twice for Arsenal against Crystal Palace.

One player who probably won't be fit to figure against Denmark is Everton's Ross Barkley.

The 20-year-old midfielder was winning rave reviews before suffering a fractured toe in an FA Cup tie in early January, ruling him out for about six weeks.

Prior to picking up his injury, Barkley was praised by the likes of Alan Hansen and Gary Lineker while his manager, Roberto Martinez, claimed he was a precocious mix of Paul Gascoigne and Michael Ballack.

Unlike the Saints trio, he has come through the national age groups, helping England U17s win the European Championships in 2011.

LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG			
KELVIN DAVIS	2	0	5	0	291(1)	0	JACK CORK	11(6)	0	5	0	112(14)	0	RICKIE LAMBERT	21(4)	8	1	1208(14)	112	
PAULO GAZZANIGA	5(1)	0	0	0	16(1)	0	VICTOR WANYAMA	15(1)	0	0	0	15(1)	0	JAY RODRIGUEZ	23(2)	10	3(2)	2	51(15)	21
ARTUR BORUC	19	0	0	0	40	0	MORGAN SCHNEIDERLIN	22(1)	1	2	0	191(29)	9	DANI OSVALDO	9(4)	3	0	0	9(4)	3
NATHANIEL CLYNE	13(4)	0	3	1	50(4)	2	ADAM LALLANA	26(1)	7	1(2)	2	1226(26)	58	TADANARI LEE	0	0	2	0	9(5)	2
CALUM CHAMBERS	13(2)	0	2	0	15(3)	0	STEVEN DAVIS	16(5)	2	4(1)	2	43(17)	6	EMMANUEL MAYUKA	0	0	1	1	3(10)	1
DEJAN LOVREN	20	2	0	0	20	2	JAMES WARD-PROWSE	12(12)	0	3(1)	0	25(25)	1	BILLY SHARP	0	0	0	0	12(6)	10
JOSE FONTE	23(1)	3	1(1)	0	165(5)	15	JASON PUNCHEON	0	0	0	0	70(10)	10	SAM GALLAGHER	1(5)	0	0(2)	1	1(7)	1
JOS H																				

Adam Rant



This week's big talking points
with **Adam Leitch**

Moyes can't wait for summer



WORRIED: The end of the season can't come quickly enough for Manchester United boss David Moyes.

DAVID Moyes must be counting down the minutes until the end of a wretched first season with Manchester United.

He could probably tally the number of high points he enjoyed during this campaign on one hand, so disappointing has it been for him and the club.

The truth is that it was always likely to be this way.

Sir Alex Ferguson was a tactical master, and that included planning his own exit strategy.

Last year's title winning United side were a long way from the best that he has produced, but were helped out by some very lacklustre opposition in the race for the Premier League trophy.

Everybody else addressed that issue in the summer, with big money signings being recruited.

At United the only major thing

that changed was the manager.

Ferguson, below, surely knew that this was going to be a tough season with other clubs strengthening so considerably and his side on the wane, and therefore the right time to get out unless he wanted another rebuilding job on his hands.

So it has proved, and it is Moyes that is carrying the can.

Now Moyes must just be looking forward to the summer, and what is going to have to be a massive overhaul.

He needs to decide what sort of United he wants to be in charge of.

Is it an intricate passing side who pick sides apart – with players like Mata, Rooney and Van

Persie he seems to be setting himself up with the tools to do just that.

Or does he want to be a more traditional United side, getting the ball out wide and crosses into the box.

They certainly chased that style of play against Fulham last weekend to little positive effect.

At the moment he has to make the best of what he's got, but going forward he must be totally clear what he wants and how he wishes the side to play. Only then can you spend money wisely and build a side around that ethos.

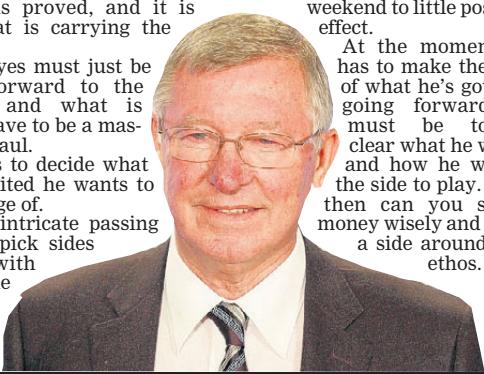
United's squad needs big changes. There are players there who just do not look good enough to play for Manchester United.

Moyes' problems will be exacerbated by a World Cup this summer that will rob him of most of the training ground time he would like with his squad, as well as the inevitable hold up in major transfers until after the tournament.

However, as long as he is determined and focussed and knows what business the club will do then he can get over that.

United look more than likely to miss out on the Champions League next season but a club of their size and stature can handle that – for one season. It shouldn't even affect their ability to sign players, such as their standing in the world game.

But things do need to change, and they need to change with a clear plan in place.



Big steps forward made by gay sport stars



CREDIT to women's footballer Casey Stoney, left, and NFL draft prospect Michael Sam for being the latest high profile sports people to come out as gay over the last week.

The world has been watching and waiting for the fallout from Tom Daley's revelation and this seems to be it.

The thing is in the minds of Daley, Stoney, Sam

and any other gay sports person it undoubtedly feels like a massive thing, and on a personal level of course it is.

It turns out that most people don't particularly care.

There might be a generational divide and Adam Rant is, thankfully, on the younger end of that spectrum where you would never judge anybody based on their sexuality.

But, on the whole, most people are fairly decent individuals and not given to outrageous prejudice.

You will get some idiots who cannot escape bigotry but Daley's actions have set a trend.

It will be interesting to see where it leads.

Adam Rant finds it absolutely impossible to believe there are not a number of gay Premier League footballers.

Once the NFL starts getting openly gay players, and if the Premier League follows, then it will be a massive step forward.

Sports stars are humans and dealing with their own fears and concerns, but they are also supposed to be role models.

Daley, Stoney and Sam proved that they most certainly are.

The Winter Games are bizarre and captivating

WHAT is it about the Winter Olympics that has a briefly hypnotic quality?

It seems everywhere you go you bump into people who want to know what the latest score in the curling is, or whether somebody they had never previously heard of had qualified for the final of a various sliding down ice or snow event.

The whole nation becomes a temporary expert in something they know all but nothing about and take no interest in at any other time.

Maybe it is just that lack of understanding, that it is so different to what we are used to that makes people enthralled by what's on offer.

To be fair, the Winter Olympics is like nothing else we see on our screens.

It's just as well people are inter-



TAKING OFF: Southampton snowboarder Billy Morgan in action in Sochi.

ested as the BBC seem to have doubled the population of Russia with the number of staff they have sent over to cover the Games.

They have managed to dig out some pretty useless folks as well.

There was a cracking commenting duo who lost all grip of professionalism after a run by a British competitor, started whooping and cheering and claiming that it was a nailed on medal, it was just a matter of what colour.

The judges weren't quite so keen and didn't even place said competitor in the top five, let alone the top three.

The commentators then admitted that actually it hadn't been as good as they said and they had just got carried away.

It's this sort of rubbish that undermines the BBC, yet they continue to employ 'personalities' as commentators across a number of sports, far from just confined to the Winter Olympics, even when they aren't up to the job.

Turns out everyone loses all good sense when there is a major sport event taking place.

Saints Spotlight



CHERRIES FIXTURES

AUGUST

Sat 3	Charlton (H)	W 2-1
Grabban 2	P'mouth LC1 (H)	W 1-0
Tues 6	O'Kane	
Sat 10	Watford (A)	L 1-6
Grabban		
Sat 17	Wigan (H)	W 1-0
Grabban		
Sat 24	Huddersfield (A)	L 1-5
Pugh		
Wed 28	Watford (LC2) (A)	L 0-2
Sat 31	Pitman	
	Doncaster (A)	W 1-0

SEPTEMBER

Sat 14	Blackpool (H)	L 1-2
Grabban		
Tue 17	Barnsley (H)	W 1-0
Pugh		
Sat 21	Middlesbrough (A)	D 3-3
Pitman (2), OG		
Sat 28	Blackburn (H)	L 1-3
Fraser		

OCTOBER

Tues 1	Leeds (A)	L 1-2
Grabban		
Sat 5	Millwall (H)	W 5-2
Fraser, Cook, Arter, Grabban, Pitman		
Sat 19	Nottm Forest (A)	D 1-1
Pugh		
Sat 26	Leicester (A)	L 1-2
Pugh		

NOVEMBER

Sat 2	Bolton (H)	L 0-2
Sat 9	Burnley (A)	D 1-1
Rantie		
Sat 23	Derby (H)	L 0-1
Sat 30	Brighton (A)	D 1-1
Ritchie		

DECEMBER

Tues 3	QPR (A)	L 0-3
Sat 7	Reading (A)	W 2-1
Grabban, Ritchie		
Sat 14	Birmingham(H)	L 0-2
Sat 21	Sheff Wed (A)	W 2-1
Ritchie, Grabban		
Thur 26	Yeovil (H)	W 3-0
Ritchie (2), O'Kane		
Sun 29	Ipswich (H)	D 1-1
Pitman		

JANUARY

Wed 1	Brighton (A)	D 1-1
Grabban		
Sat 11	Wigan (A)	L 3-0
Sat 18	Watford (H)	D 1-1
Grabban		
Sat 25	Charlton (A)	Postponed
Tues 28	Huddersfield (H)	W 2-1
Grabban, Rantie		

FEBRUARY

Sat 1	Leicester (H)	L 1-0
Sat 8	Bolton (A)	D 2-2
Sat 15	Burnley	(H)
Sat 22	Derby	(A)

MARCH

Sat 1	Doncaster	(H)
Sat 8	Blackpool	(A)
Wed 12	Blackburn	(A)
Sat 15	Middlesbrough	(H)
Sat 22	Barnsley	(A)
Tues 25	Leeds	(A)
Sat 29	Birmingham	(A)

APRIL

Sat 5	QPR (H)	
Tues 8	Reading	(H)
Sat 12	Yeovil	(A)
Fri 18	Sheff Wed	(H)
Mon 21	Ipswich	(A)
Sat 26	Notts Forest	(H)

MAY

Sat 3	Millwall	(A)
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CONTRASTING TALE

Simon Carter

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SPORTS EDITOR

AS one Saints striker was readjusting to life back in Italy, so another was reaching a remarkable milestone.

A day after Dani Osvaldo had left St Mary's in shame, Rickie Lambert struck his 100th league goal for Saints.

The contrast with Osvaldo could hardly be greater. The Italian international cost Saints 15 times more than they splashed out on Lambert.

In return, Osvaldo has been banned for as many games by the FA – three – as he has scored Premier League goals. He has also been fined £40,000 by the sport's governing body in this country for his part in an off-field melee at Newcastle in December.

In addition, he was fined the best

**"A day after Dani Osvaldo left in shame
Lambert hit his
100th Saints goal."**

part of £100,000 – two weeks wages – for his alleged head butt on teammate Jose Fonte in training.

Oh, and don't forget his bookings – again, as many yellow cards as goals scored.

Fines totalling almost £150K, a three-match suspension, three cautions ... and only a few brief moments to illustrate why Mauricio Pochettino and Nicola Cortese decided to shatter Saints' transfer record last August.

Hardly a glowing CV to show prospective employers.

Juventus weren't concerned, though.

And if they hadn't given Osvaldo a route back to Italy, no doubt someone else would have.

After all, this is the man who plundered 16 Serie A goals in only 29 appearances last season.

The lad can play, obviously.

And thereby lies the obvious frustrations with him.

"Why Always Me?" was the legend famously emblazoned on Mario Balotelli's T-shirt during his time at Manchester City.

It could equally apply to Dani Osvaldo.

Last September, I penned a



TOTAL CONTRAST: Rickie Lambert, left, and Dani Osvaldo

Differing fortunes of Saints strikers



lengthy piece on Osvaldo's controversial background that was printed over four pages of the *Sports Pink*.

It was a long piece for one good reason – like Balotelli, there were a lot of incidents that needed includ-

ing in order to paint a picture for Saints fans.

The controversies included five sendings off in 2012 alone for club and country, punching Roma colleague Eric Lamela for not passing

to him in a game, run-ins with managers – both in person and on Twitter – club fines, and an exclusion from Italy's Confederations Cup squad last summer for disciplinary reasons.

MORE SAINTS NEWS ONLINE: WWW.DAILYCHO.CO.UK

Saints Spotlight

OF DANI AND RICKIE



Like Roberto Mancini did with Balotelli, you got the impression from scanning Osvaldo's list of 'previous' that some of his former managers had just lost patience.

The article I wrote last September ended with these paragraphs ...

Osvaldo's outburst did not come as a huge shock to his former Bologna boss, Franco Colombo.

"Osvaldo has potential talent, but he's always missing something – especially in terms of his character," said Colombo. "Football is a team game and that is what comes first unless

you are someone who scores two goals a tie.

"Inside of him there is a desire to be a protagonist, so when he's on the bench there is an aversion towards everybody else.

"He doesn't accept that and he pays the consequences. I recognised his talent, but I needed a team player."

So who is he, then, this Pablo Dani Osvaldo?

Have Saints spent an absolute fortune on a trouble-maker, or on someone with a colourful side who can score the goals to catapult the club into the top six?

"I am no angel but I am not a bad person either," Osvaldo said on arriving at Saints last month.

"There were things that happened in the dressing room (at Roma) that should not have come out.

"They should have been resolved in the dressing room.

"All of the problems coming out of Roma were being blamed on me and that was completely unfair.

"That is why I am very happy I have made the change to Southampton."

Let the last word go to Prandelli, the man who will hopefully take Osvaldo



Ex-Saint wants to stay at Cherries

SETTLED star Andrew Surman has revealed he would be open to discussing an extension to his Cherries stay.

The 27-year-old midfielder, on a season-long loan from Premier League Norwich City, has played a starring role in a revitalised Cherries midfield since the start of December.

Despite starting just three of Cherries' opening 17 Championship matches, resurgent Surman made himself a mainstay in the middle of the park, securing a spot in Eddie Howe's XI for the past 12 league matches.

His form alongside anchor man Eunan O'Kane and creative spark Harry Arter has attracted plenty of plaudits from the Dean Court faithful. The former Saints star, whose Canaries contract expires at the end of next season, reiterated he has yet to discuss his long-term future with either his parent club or Cherries.

But with his destiny at Carrow Road unclear, Surman refused to rule out the possibility of staying in Dorset should the move suit both parties.

Surman, right, said: "Having signed on loan for the season I knew I was

going to be here which helped me to settle in and I have really enjoyed it.

"Maybe we need to reevaluate what's best for me and the club, but with January gone, we probably wouldn't be discussing anything concrete until the summer.

"It's just a case of having in mind what I want to do next season and I will have to see what Norwich say as well because I'm not sure what their intentions are at this stage. It's all up in the air.

"If it was right for everyone, of course I would be open to it (staying at Cherries).

"It just depends on where things are when the summer comes round because I know I have got a few decisions to make."

Meanwhile, Surman put Cherries' recent upturn in fortunes down to the less-experienced squad members quickly learning about the wily ways of the Championship and hailed his midfield colleagues for bringing out the best in his game. He added: "Eunan O'Kane has done well since getting his run in the team.

"He suits that sitting role in midfield and gets us playing which has enabled me and Harry Arter to get forward and press the opposition a bit more.

"Everyone has learned a lot from this season, including myself."



SAINTS SEASON SO FAR STATS: PAGES 18-25

Continued on page 14

Saints Spotlight

Dani left Saints in shame

From page 13

Games at tiny grounds – by Premier League standards, anyway – can be watched by crowds of less than 2,000.

Not really a crowd, more of a gathering.

I have mentioned Rochdale, Stockport, Macclesfield and Bristol Rovers for a reason, for they are four of Lambert's former employees.

Once upon a time, the biggest clubs in this country used to sign players from the lower divisions.

Liverpool dipped down for the likes of Ray Clemence, Kevin Keegan and Phil Neal, Manchester United signed Steve Coppell and West Bromwich Albion bought Cyrille Regis from non league football and turned him into an England international.

Nowadays, not so many players are plucked from the third



RICKIE LAMBERT

and fourth tiers and thrown into the deep end of top flight football.

With all the above in mind, I love Rickie Lambert's story.

I'd happily ghost-write his autobiography for him!

Here is a man who once worked part-time in a factory putting the lids on jars of beetroot.

Here is a man who used to run out for some of the most unfashionable clubs in the Football League.

Not just for a season. For over ten years he did this, week in week out.

At Rochdale.

At Macclesfield.

At Stockport.

Lambert knows what it's like on the other side of the fence.

Like the Billy Goats who couldn't get over to the lush grass because of the troll under the bridge in the popular children's story, Lambert has spent many years on the outside looking in.

He must have looked at a Premier League swimming in cash and wondered if he would ever get to play a part in it.

Continued on facing page

CUP RIVALS SHARE

SAINTS were this weekend back at Sunderland for the third time this season.

Here, the Sports Pink looks back at the club's previous league visits to Roker Park and the Stadium of Light.

**April 17, 1961
Sunderland 3 Saints 1**

Teenager Nick Sharkey scored twice as Saints suffered defeat on their first ever league visit to Roker Park.

The 17-year-old scored his first after just seven minutes, by which time Saints were already trailing to Willie McPheat's second minute opener.

Brian Clifton reduced the arrears before half-time in the Second Division clash, before Sharkey netted his second.

**April 7 1962
Sunderland 3 Saints 0**

Brian Clough opened the scoring for promotion-chasing Sunderland against fellow high-fliers Saints in the fifth minute.

It was one of Clough's 29 league goals in his first season at Roker Park.

George Herd and Harry Hooper added further goals for the Black Cats, who eventually missed out on automatic promotion by a point.

Ted Bates' men finished sixth, eight points adrift of third-placed Sunderland.

**May 4 1963
Sunderland 4 Saints 0**

Johnny Crossan grabbed his second hat-trick of the Second Division season as Saints were well beaten.

Crossan netted twice inside the first 20 minutes and completed his treble in the second period after Jimmy Davison had made it 3-0.

The 34,612 crowd was the biggest Saints played in front of in the league that term.

Sunderland were to again miss out again on promotion, finishing third for the second season running.

**November 30 1963
Sunderland 1 Saints 2**

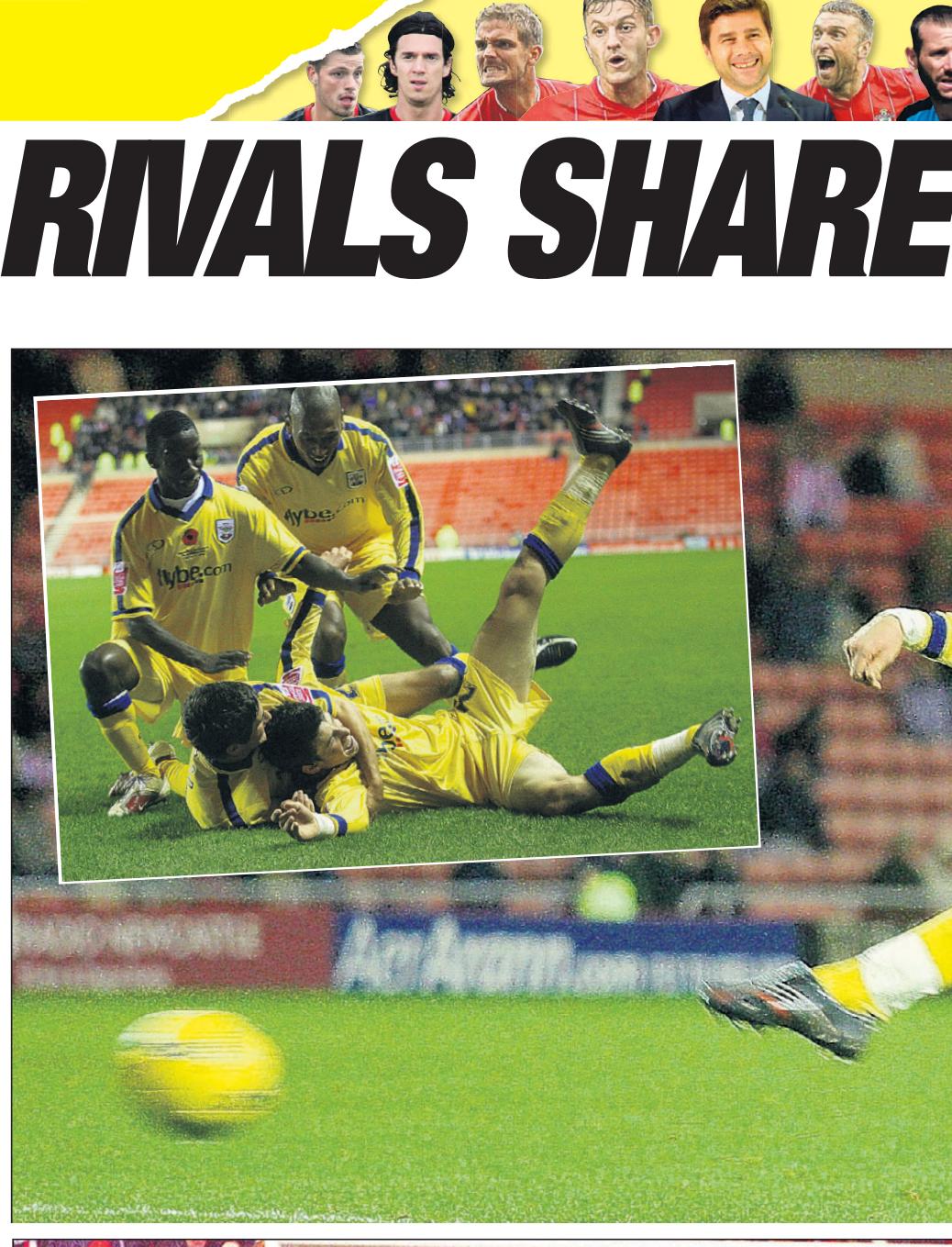
Ted Bates' men produced their best win of the season to beat the leaders on home soil.

Saints, who started the game in eighth place, fell behind to a Johnny Crossan goal but hit back to snatch a shock success.

Ken Wimshurst levelled nine minutes into the second half, before suffering a broken jaw later in the game.

Martin Chivers sit up Ian White to score the winner 11 minutes from time.

It was one of only two home defeats Sunderland would endure all season



SAVED: Kevin Phillips' penalty is saved by Neil Moss.

as they finished second to grab the promotion they had been coveting for several years.

Saints were to finish fifth in the

Second Division table, reaching the 100-goal milestone by caning Rotherham 6-1 in their final game.

In comparison, Sunderland went

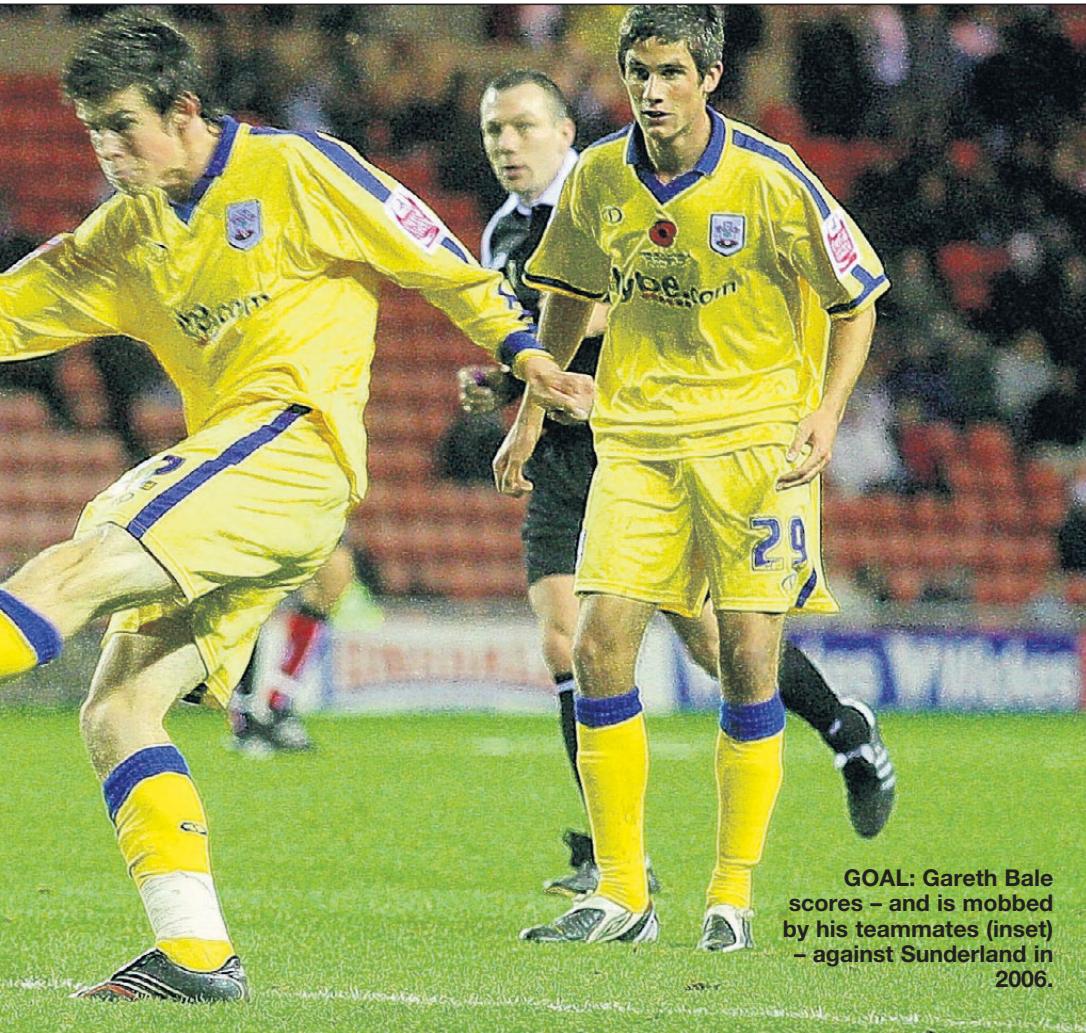
up having scored 19 goals fewer than Saints.

Defence was the key – the Black Cats conceded just 37 goals in their

THE PINK: BEST FOR SAINTS NOSTALGIA

Saints Spotlight

A RICH HISTORY...



HEADS UP: Steve Moran heads in for Saints in their 2-0 win in 1983.

42 games, while Saints shipped 73!

August 24, 1966
Sunderland 2 Saints 0

Saints fell to defeat in their first ever away match as a First Division club. Winger Alan Gauden put

Sunderland ahead in the first half and George Mulhall completed the win 13 minutes from time. Bizarrely, the return fixture took



Rickie's chance

From facing page

place at The Dell just a week later.

This time, Mulhall fired Sunderland into a 47th minute lead before Saints hit back to win 3-1 with goals from Terry Paine (penalty), John Sydenham and Ron Davies.

March 2 1968
Sunderland 0 Saints 3

Saints romped to their first ever league win on Wearside.

All three goals came in the second half and Ron Davies scored two of them - both trademark headers.

In between that double, Terry Paine had made it 2-0.

Saints had entered the game fifth from bottom and having lost 11 of their 15 away games.

Sunderland were deep in trouble in second bottom spot, but recovered to finish one place above 16th placed Saints.

August 17 1968
Sunderland 1 Saints 0

Scottish international winger George Mulhall scored the only goal in the 73rd minute.

November 22 1969
Sunderland 2 Saints 2

This was a crucial encounter with Sunderland propelling up the top flight, and Saints just three places and a point above them.

All four goals came in the second period, with Bruce Stuckey firing the hosts into a 54th minute lead.

Mick Channon equalised in the 76th minute before the same player put Saints ahead five minutes later.

John Lathan levelled in the 83rd minute.

The league table did not change much after that – Saints were to finish in fourth bottom spot, three points and two places ahead of the relegated Weariders.

August 24 1974
Sunderland 3 Saints 1

Saints' poor start to life back in the Second Division continued as they shipped three goals in the closing 25 minutes.

Mick Channon had fired them into a half-time lead, and visiting keeper Ian Turner had also saved a first half penalty.

Future Saints defender Dave Watson levelled in the 65th minute before further goals followed from strike pair Bryan 'Pop' Robson and Billy Hughes.

March 27 1976
Sunderland 3 Saints 0

Striker Roy Greenwood scored in each half as Sunderland took another step towards the Second Division title.

Mel Holden was also on target against a Saints side with possibly one eye on their forthcoming FA

Continued on page 16

At the age of 30, he got the chance to milk Rupert Murdoch's cash cow and has taken it with both hands.

All those days and nights playing in front of a few thousand die-hards – and, believe me, if you watch third or fourth tier football on a November night you ARE a die-hard – were all worthwhile.

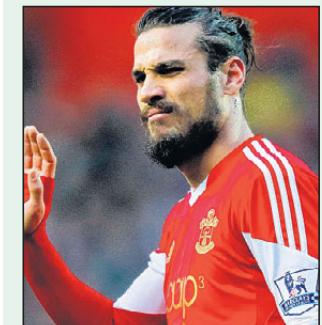
What would Dani Osvaldo make of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy?

What would he make of playing for Rochdale in the fourth division on a cold night midway through an English winter?

What would he make of having to get on a bus early on a Saturday morning, because his club could not afford an overnight stay for an away game?

What would he make of having to run out at a small, cramped ground – some still with terracing!! – where locals would no doubt give him grief about his ponytail?

Of course, they are in a way ridiculous questions to pose, because Osvaldo will never have to endure any of the above situations.



DANI OSVALDO

Wouldn't do him any harm, though, would it?

That is what I like about the current Saints team.

Apart from Lambert, the likes of Adam Lallana, Morgan Schneiderlin, Jose Fonte, Guly and Kelvin Davis were all part of the club's two seasons in the third division.

They never played in front of low crowds at St Mary's, but sometimes there were only a few thousand away.

Most of those played in front of a crowd of 3,800 at Rochdale less than three years ago, when Saints lost 2-0.

They have come a long, long way in those three years, and it's great to see that so many players have gone all the way with them.

That is why I look at the success that Rickie Lambert and Adam Lallana are enjoying at the moment.

Any self-respecting football fan should be glad for them, because not everything has always been handed on the proverbial plate to them.

Possibly the same cannot be said of Dani Osvaldo, which is why it is hard for anyone to really feel sorry for him.

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Saints Spotlight

POMPEY FIXTURES

AUGUST

Sat 3	Oxford (H)	L 1-4
Agyemang		
Tues 6	B'mouth LC1 (A)	L 0-1
Sat 10	Accrington (A)	D 2-2
Connolly 2		
Sat 17	Morecambe (H)	W 3-0
Wallace, Connolly, Agyemang		
Sat 24	Mansfield (A)	D 2-2
Barcham, Connolly		
Sat 31	Chesterfield (H)	L 0-2

SEPTEMBER

Tues 3	Torquay FLT1 (a)	D 0-0
Won on penalties		
Sat 7	Cheltenham (A)	D 2-2
Agyemang, Ertl		
Sat 14	Burton (A)	W 2-1
Holmes, Ferry		
Sat 21	Fleetwood (H)	L 0-1
Sat 28	York (A)	L 2-4
Wallace, Marquis		

OCTOBER

Sat 5	Rochdale (H)	W 3-0
Ngala 2, Wallace		
9 Oxford (A) JPT		W 2-1
Marquis, Agyemang		
Sat 12	Plymouth (A)	D 1-1
Wallace		
Sat 19	Bury (H)	W 1-0
N'Gala		
Sat 26	Torquay (A)	D 1-1
Bird		

NOVEMBER

Sat 2	Exeter (H)	W 3-2
Holmes, Bird 2		
Sat 9	Stevenage (A, FAC)	L 1-2
Connolly		
Tue 12	Newport (A, JPT)	L 0-3
Sat 16	Wimbledon (A)	L 0-4
Sat 23	Scunthorpe (H)	L 1-2
Craddock		
Tues 26	Southend (H)	L 1-2
Barcham		
Sat 30	Hartlepool (A)	D 0-0

DECEMBER

Tues 4	Wycombe (H)	D 2-2
Barcham, Agyemang		
Sat 14	Newport (H)	L 0-2
Sat 21	Bristol Rovers (A)	L 0-2
Thur 26	Dag & Red (H)	W 1-0
Padovani		
Sun 29	Northampton (H)	D 0-0

JANUARY

Wed 1	Southend (A)	L 1-2
Bradley		
Sat 4	Accrington (H)	pp
Sat 11	Oxford Utd (A)	D 0-0
Sat 18	Mansfield (H)	D 1-1
Taylor		
Sat 25	Morecambe (A)	D 2-2
Jervis (2)		
Tues 28	Wycombe (A)	W 1-0
Taylor		

FEBRUARY

Sat 1	Torquay (H)	L 1-0
Sat 8	Exeter	D 1-1
Jervis		
Sat 15	Wimbledon	(H)
Sat 22	Scunthorpe	(A)

MARCH

Sat 1	Chesterfield	(A)
Sat 8	Cheltenham	(H)
Tues 11	Burton	(H)
Sat 15	Fleetwood	(A)
Sat 22	York	(H)
Tues 25	Rochdale	(A)
Sat 29	Newport	(A)

APRIL

Sat 5	Hartlepool	(H)
Sat 12	Dag & Red	(A)
Sat 19	Bristol Rovers	(H)
Mon 21	Northampton	(A)
Sat 26	Bury	(A)

MAY

Sat 3	Plymouth	(H)
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From page 15

Cup semi final against Crystal Palace the following week.

**August 23 1980
Sunderland 1 Saints 2**

Saints continued their fine start to life with Kevin Keegan with victory at Roker Park.

Chris Nicholl opened the scoring in the fifth minute, with current West Ham boss Sam Allardyce leveling ten minutes later.

Charlie George plundered what proved to be the winner on the stroke of half-time.

**March 10 1982
Sunderland 2 Saints 0**

A young Ally McCoist was among the Sunderland scorers at Roker Park as the rock bottom hosts stunned Lawrie McMenemy's top flight leaders.

The striker was just 19 when the Black Cats splashed out a then record £400,000 on the St Johnstone starlet in the summer of 1981.

McCoist was to score just nine times in 65 league and cup games for Sunderland, but fared better after a £185,000 move to Glasgow Rangers – as 355 goals for the Scottish giants testifies!

Nick Pickering had put Sunderland ahead three minutes into the second half.

It was a huge upset, as the hosts had started the game bottom of the table with just one home win to their name all season.

In contrast, Saints were two points ahead at the top, with Swansea second.

**October 9 1982
Sunderland 1 Saints 1**

Both goals came within 60 seconds of each other just after the hour mark.

For the second season running, Ally McCoist scored against Saints only for Steve Williams to quickly equalise.

**September 10 1983
Sunderland 0 Saints 2**

Two goals from striker Steve Moran gave Saints victory at Roker Park.

He headed in a Danny Wallace cross on 22 minutes, before adding a second on 67 minutes.

**August 25 1984
Sunderland 3 Saints 1**

Gary Bennett scored after just three minutes of his Sunderland debut on the opening day of the season.

Future Saint Barry Venison and Mark Proctor extended the lead before David Armstrong grabbed a late consolation.

The result had no bearing on how the season would pan out - Saints going on to finish fifth and Sunderland being relegated.

After the season ended, Lawrie McMenemy sensationally left Saints to take over at Roker Park.

**January 1 1991
Sunderland 1 Saints 0**

A nice little New Year's Day trip to

TWO SIDES WITH



GOAL: Jason Puncheon scores against Sunderland last season

the north east for Chris Nicholl's Saints saw them defeated.

Kevin Ball scored the only goal from the penalty spot after Neil Ruddock's reckless tackle on Colin Pascoe.

Sunderland had been promoted back to the top flight at the end of 1989/90, despite losing the second tier play off final to Swindon Town at Wembley.

The Robins were denied promotion after admitting illegal payments.

Sunderland's return to the elite league did not last long, as the win against Saints was one of only eight in 38 attempts and they were relegated Sunderland.

**April 24 1997
Sunderland 0 Saints 1**

Kevin Phillips, once released by Saints as a schoolboy, struck both

goals – and was only denied a hat-trick by a sub keeper.

Phillips opened the scoring with a first half penalty on Saints' first ever visit to the Stadium of Light.

He then saw an 81st minute spot-kick saved by Neil Moss after Paul Jones had been sent off for a foul. Moss was beaten by Phillips' second goal in the dying seconds.

Phillips, who later joined Saints for £3.2m in 2003, was to end up as the Premier League's top scorer with 30 goals in what was his debut season in the top flight.

**November 11 2000
Sunderland 2 Saints 2**

James Beattie fired Saints into the lead from 40 yards after a poor goal-

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Saints Spotlight



keeper's clearance had landed nicely for him.

Niall Quinn levelled before half-time and Sunderland looked to have won it when Don Hutchison scored on 80 minutes.

Dean Richards, though, popped up in the 89th minute to level and there was still time for Jo Tessem to squander an easy chance.

March 23 2002
Sunderland 1 Saints 1

Jo Tessem was the hero this time as his 87th minute equaliser salvaged a point for Saints at the Stadium of Light.

Jason McAteer had fired Sunderland ahead just after the hour mark.

January 28 2003
Sunderland 0 Saints 1

James Beattie scored the only goal a fortnight before he made his senior England international debut. Beattie latched onto a long ball from Michael Svensson to round keeper Thomas Sorensen and score.

The Black Cats endured a miserable season, winning just four times and losing 27 of their 38 games en route to finishing 23 points adrift of safety.

November 11 2006
Sunderland 1 Saints 1

Gareth Bale grabbed a dramatic last minute leveller for George

Burley's men.

The Black Cats had entered the game down in 18th place after 16 games of the Championship season, with Saints 10th.

Yet under Roy Keane they put together a magnificent run which saw them end up as champions, with Saints sixth.

Ross Wallace had put Sunderland ahead in the 62nd minute before Bale's late equaliser.

May 12 2013
Sunderland 1 Saints 1

Jason Puncheon's equaliser gave Saints the point which guaranteed them their Premier League survival in their penultimate game of the season.

Phil Bardsley had put the hosts ahead on 68 minutes, but Puncheon levelled eight minutes later.

January 18 2014
Sunderland 2 Saints 2

Saints stormed into an early 2-0 lead in their first game since the dramatic departure of chairman Nicola Cortese.

Jay Rodriguez and Dejan Lovren put Mauricio Pochettino's side in control, only for the Black Cats to hit back through Fabio Borini and Adam Johnson.

The game ended badly for Saints as both Lovren and sub Gaston Ramirez suffered ankle injuries which continue to rule them out of action.

Hodgson: The stage is set for Rooney

ROY Hodgson has told Wayne Rooney the stage is set for him to prove he is one of the world's best players this summer.

Much has changed regarding the England squad since the last international fixtures in November.

Raheem Sterling, Adam Johnson, Luke Shaw and Ross Barkley have all improved their chances of making a late surge into Hodgson's World Cup squad.

Andy Carroll has returned from injury, but Theo Walcott's World Cup dreams were dashed when he ruptured his anterior cruciate ligament in the north London derby.

Some things never change, though. The one constant that remains is that the national side are hugely reliant on Rooney and Hodgson knows it.

Rooney, pictured, remains one of the few England players around these days who can win a match in a second. He is capable of piercing defences with his power and pace. He can beat a keeper from any number of yards and his work-rate is second to none.

And, luckily for England, Hodgson reckons Rooney is hitting peak form just at the right time for this summer's tournament in Brazil.

"Wayne has taken on responsibility with Manchester United and he always takes responsibility with the national team and I think this has been a great year for him," the England manager said.

"At the moment circumstances seem to be contriving towards England having a Wayne Rooney in top condition physically and mentally, and in terms of his ability – we all know how good that is."

The England boss added: "Maybe once or twice in the past he hasn't exploded as maybe he has on our national stage, where we all accept him as being an outstanding player."

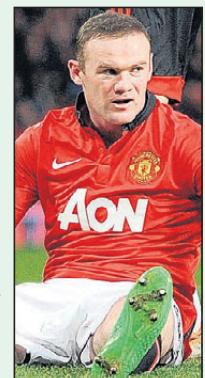
"My hope and the message to him is: 'this is your chance'."

"He is 28, that's a terrific age."

"This is the world stage, the perfect opportunity for him to prove to people in the world what we already know – that he is a very, very gifted footballer, a very good all-round footballer who is capable of playing in many positions."

"He is someone who is a leading light in his team which is one of the best in the world."

"It would be nice to see him reproducing that form for England and I am confident he will. It's a great opportunity to show that he is not just a great star in the Premier League, but that he is a world star."



Saints Spotlight

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"I absolutely did not think I would ever be in this position back then, when I was a chalet maid. I was cooking breakfasts, cleaning toilets. I was having a great time, I was snowboarding every day and that was amazing. It's still sinking in, the history part. Hopefully I'll be in a few pub quizzes now" - Snowboarder Jenny Jones after becoming the first Briton to win a medal on snow at a Winter Olympics by taking slopestyle bronze in Sochi.

"This was a truly historic occasion for Team GB and the commentary team were understandably very excited. However we acknowledge that on occasion this excitement got the better of them" - A BBC statement after the broadcaster received over 300 complaints about its excitable commentary on Jones' medal.

"The door isn't open because he has retired from international football. When players retire, we move on" - England manager Roy Hodgson rules out a return to the national team for Chelsea's John Terry.

"If there is one club who have been great at winning games in the second half of the season, and putting pressure on the teams above, it is Manchester United" - David Moyes insists he will not give up on a top-four finish despite falling 11 points off the pace in the race for a Champions League berth.



"I was more upset about the performance. That wasn't an honest display from us. I mentioned a few things in the dressing room that I hope hits home - I won't mention them to the media" - Newcastle manager Alan Pardew, above, is an angry man after seeing his team thumped 4-0 at home to Tottenham.

"I'm not considering staying in England as the only club I ever wanted to play for here is Manchester United. I never could have imagined winning 15 trophies. However I have decided I will move on at the end of this season. I want to challenge myself again" - Nemanja Vidic announces he is to leave Manchester United at the end of the season.

"It was breathtaking, some of our play. The intensity of our pressing and the goals were fantastic. It gave us a great platform. We've been doing it most of the season" - Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers after his side's 5-1 demolition of Arsenal.



STATS SHOW SAINTS

SAINTS have already picked up more bookings in 26 Premier League games this season than they did in the whole of 2012/13.

They have collected 44 yellow cards, compared to only 43 last term.

Saints are one of seven clubs yet to have anyone sent off this season.

Compare that to this weekend's FA Cup opponents Sunderland.

The Black Cats have earned six red cards this season, with defender Wes Brown picking up three of them.

Saints have only had two red cards in 64 league games since returning to the top flight.

Both of them came in the same game, Danny Fox and Gaston Ramirez being sent off at home to West Bromwich Albion last April.

Stoke picked up most cautions in the Premier League last season and are again leading the way in 2013/14.

INDISCIPLINE 2013/14

	Y	R
Stoke	57	3
West Ham	44	5
Sunderland	38	6
Man United	48	2
Aston Villa	53	0
West Brom	52	0
Newcastle	37	4
Tottenham	42	2
Hull	39	3
Swansea	44	1
Man City	46	0
Arsenal	37	3
Norwich	40	2
Chelsea	41	1
SAINTS	44	0
Everton	39	1
Liverpool	37	0
Crystal P	31	2
Fulham	37	0
Cardiff	30	0

INDISCIPLINE 2012/13

	Y	R
Stoke	78	4
Newcastle	72	4
Aston Villa	72	3
West Ham	74	1
West Brom	63	4
Wigan	66	2
Man City	62	3
Sunderland	62	3
Everton	59	3
QPR	59	3
Swansea	59	2
Norwich	60	1
Tottenham	55	2
Man United	57	1
Liverpool	54	2
Chelsea	51	3
Arsenal	42	5
Fulham	48	3
SAINTS	43	2
Reading	45	1

MORGAN Schneiderlin is



leading the way at Saints again in terms of falling foul of referees.

The Frenchman picked up more cautions (9) than any of his St Mary's colleagues last season.

He has seven bookings to his name this term, two more than Victor Wanyama and Jose Fonte.

Schneiderlin has already sat out one game this sea-

son, an automatic suspension for reaching five bookings.

If he, or anyone else, reaches ten cautions before the second Sunday in April, they will collect another automatic one-match ban.

SAINTS DISCIPLINE 2013/14

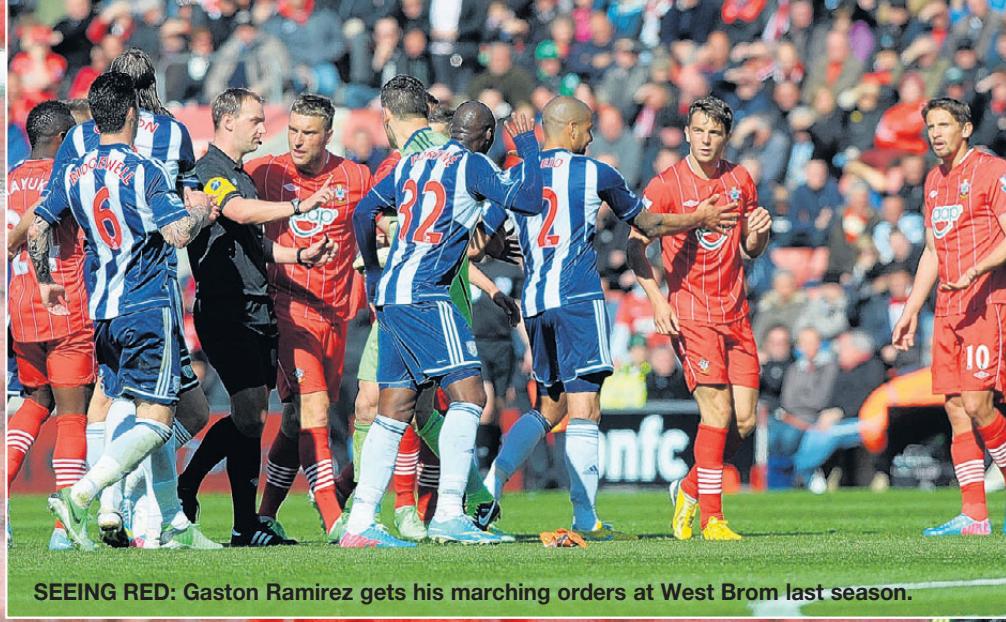
	Y	R
Morgan Schneiderlin	7	0
José Fonte	5	0
Victor Wanyama	5	0

	Y	R		
Dejan Lovren	4	0	José Fonte	5
Jack Cork	3	0	José Hooiveld	0
James Ward-Prowse	3	0	Jay Rodriguez	5
Dani Osvaldo	3	0	Daniel Fox	1
Adam Lallana	2	0	Rickie Lambert	2
Luke Shaw	2	0	Gastón Ramírez	1
Jay Rodriguez	2	0	Adam Lallana	0
Nathaniel Clyne	2	0	Luke Shaw	2
Rickie Lambert	2	0	Maya Yoshida	0
Gastón Ramírez	1	0	Nathaniel Clyne	2
Steven Davis	1	0	Jason Puncheon	0
José Hooiveld	1	0	Steven Davis	1
			Jack Cork	0
			Steve De Ridder	1
			Artur Boruc	0

THE PINK & DAILY ECHO: BEST FOR SAINTS NEWS

Saints Spotlight

AREN'T SO SAINTLY



SEEING RED: Gaston Ramirez gets his marching orders at West Brom last season.



SEEING RED: Jose Fonte picks up a booking and, right, Morgan Schneiderlin gets stuck in against Spurs.

PREMIER LEAGUE MOST YELLOW CARDS 2013/14

	Y	R
Jonas Olsson (WBA)	8	0
Jonathan Walters (Stoke)	8	0
Marouane Chamakh (Pal)	8	0
Wayne Rooney (Man United)	8	0
Angel Rangel (Swansea)	7	0
Branislav Ivanovic (Chelsea)	7	0
Claudio Yacob (West Brom)	7	0
Gabriel Agbonlahor (Villa)	7	0
Gareth Barry (Everton)	7	0
M Schneiderlin (Saints)	7	0
Moussa Sissoko Newcastle	7	0
Pablo Zabaleta (Man City)	7	0
Youssouf Mulumbu (WBA)	7	0

PREMIER LEAGUE MOST YELLOW CARDS 2012/13

	Y	R
Craig Gardner (Sunderland)	10	1
Bradley Johnson (Norwich)	10	0
Luis Suarez (Liverpool)	10	0
Matthew Lowton (Villa)	10	0
Dean Whitehead (Stoke)	9	1
James Collins (West Ham)	9	0
James Perch (Newcastle)	9	0
Leon Osman (Everton)	9	0
M Schneiderlin (SAINTS)	9	0
Ryan Shawcross (Stoke)	9	0
Stéphane Mbia (QPR)	9	1
Steven N'Zonzi (Stoke)	9	1

SAINTS have shown they are much better at keeping possession this term.

They are currently second in the Premier League in terms of average possession in games.

Only Swansea have a better percentage average than Saints' 58 per cent.

The club's best possession of the season came at home to Aston Villa in early

December when they had over 77 per cent of the ball – still lost!

Saints' possession during their first season back in the top flight in 2012/13 was 52.5 per cent – still good enough to put them in the top ten.

The stats also show that Manchester United have had more of the ball this season than they did en route to winning the title last term.



QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"The England team needs to rebuild after the whitewash in Australia. To do that we must invest in our captain Alastair Cook and we must support him in creating a culture in which we can be confident he will have the full support of all players, with everyone pulling in the same direction and able to trust each other. It is for those reasons that we have decided to move on without Kevin Pietersen" - the ECB expands on its decision to end the international career of Kevin Pietersen.

"The safety of the City and Sunderland supporters is the most important thing. We were ready to play this game but the well-being of the people coming to the Etihad Stadium is paramount" - Manchester City manager Manuel Pellegrini reluctantly accepts the decision of Greater Manchester Police to call off the league clash at home to Sunderland due to strong winds in the north-west.

"Their game plan was straightforward. They put crosses in from wide angles. We defended it well. If you are well-organised, it can be easy to defend against" - Fulham manager Rene Meulensteen admits Manchester United's tactics were easy to counter as the Cottagers claimed a creditable 2-2 draw at Old Trafford.



"I was saying to the lads that I've never headed that many balls since the Conference!" - Meulensteen's ex-Darlington defender Dan Burn, pictured, on dealing with United's one-dimensional onslaught. Burn later clarified: "I didn't mean that quote to sound as disrespectful as it's been reported."

"I grew up with Mark (McMorris) and Staale (Sandbeck), I've known them for the past six years. We've all become really good friends. We're not, like, enemies at all. We love each other. Oh, that's probably not a good thing to say" - the United States' snowboard slopestyle gold medalist Sage Kotsenburg jokes about Russia's law that bans 'promoting homosexual behaviour'.

"I feel it's really important for me to speak out as a gay player because there are so many people struggling who are gay, and you hear about people taking their own lives because they are homosexual. That should never happen. How can I expect other people to speak about themselves if I'm not willing to do that myself?" - England and Arsenal Ladies defender Casey Stoney on her decision to come out.

Continued: page 20

MORE SAINTS NEWS ONLINE: WWW.DAILYCHO.CO.UK

Saints Spotlight

BOOK of the WEEK

How Not to be a Football Millionaire:
Keith Gillespie – My Autobiography
Sports book of the month price:
£8.49 saving 50% on rrp

EVERY aspiring young professional footballer should acquaint himself with the cautionary tale of Keith Gillespie – a man plagued by gambling.

He was a handsome, dashing right-winger who should have had, if not it all, so much more.

How much money did he blow living life in the fast lane with his demons? One afternoon he sat down with his agent and came to the eye-watering conclusion: £2,215,875.

The Ulsterman's autobiography overflows with juicy tales. Excess all areas – booze-ups and punch-ups, blood and guts.

A little poignancy too, tucked away on the final page under the heading Individual Honours, where there is painfully little of consequence. The highlight? The 75 minutes he contributed towards Blackburn winning the League Cup final against Tottenham in 2002.

Although he represented Northern Ireland on 86 occasions, the game's glittering prizes eluded Gillespie. While his pals Becks, Scholesy, Giggsy, Nicky and Gaz' were central to Manchester United's historic treble in 1999 and won medals by the bucketload, he was more often left empty-handed after discarding another failed betting slip.

Gillespie got an adrenaline rush from the "hum of activity, the maze of screens" the very first time he walked into a betting shop as a 16-year-old United apprentice earning £46 a week.

Senior figures at the club – including Alex Ferguson – were happy to deploy him as a bookies runner and the prison officer's son from Larne was buzzing, in return, when the manager tucked a £50 note in his top pocket as a tip following a successful coup.

Ferguson sold him to Newcastle where his wages escalated and his addiction went through the roof. One Black Friday saw him squander £62,000.

The bad luck was not restricted to gambling. A ruptured abdomen cost him his place in Kevin Keegan's Newcastle team which infamously blew a huge lead in the Premier League in 1996 and saw United win the title instead.

Gillespie emerges with credit from what could have been a sympathy-seeking sob story.

Yet, turning 39 this winter, what he makes of the future following a career spanning 11 clubs is anyone's guess – his own included.

We've teamed up with Sports Book of the Month and have a copy of *HOW NOT TO BE A FOOTBALL MILLIONAIRE: KEITH GILLESPIE – MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY* to give away.

To win this week's sports book, go to their website (www.sportsbookofthemonth.com) and answer the following question:

Which year were Newcastle United last promoted to the Premier League?



PRESSING GAME

From page 19

PASS SUCCESS RATE 2012/13

1	Man United	85.7
2	Arsenal	85.6
3	Man City	85
4	Swansea	85
5	Liverpool	84.2
6	Chelsea	83.2
7	Tottenham	83.1
8	Wigan	82.5
9	Fulham	82.1
10	Newcastle	79.8
11	Everton	79.4
12	West Brom	78.6
13	Aston Villa	77.8
14	SAINTS	77.7
15	QPR	77.2
16	Sunderland	76.1
17	West Ham	74.2
18	Norwich	73.9
19	Reading	70.3
20	Stoke	70.2

SAINTS are a more attacking force in the Premier League this season – but only just!

The club are averaging 13.8 shots per league game this season, compared to 13.6 last term.

Noticed the difference?

SHOTS PER GAME 2013/14

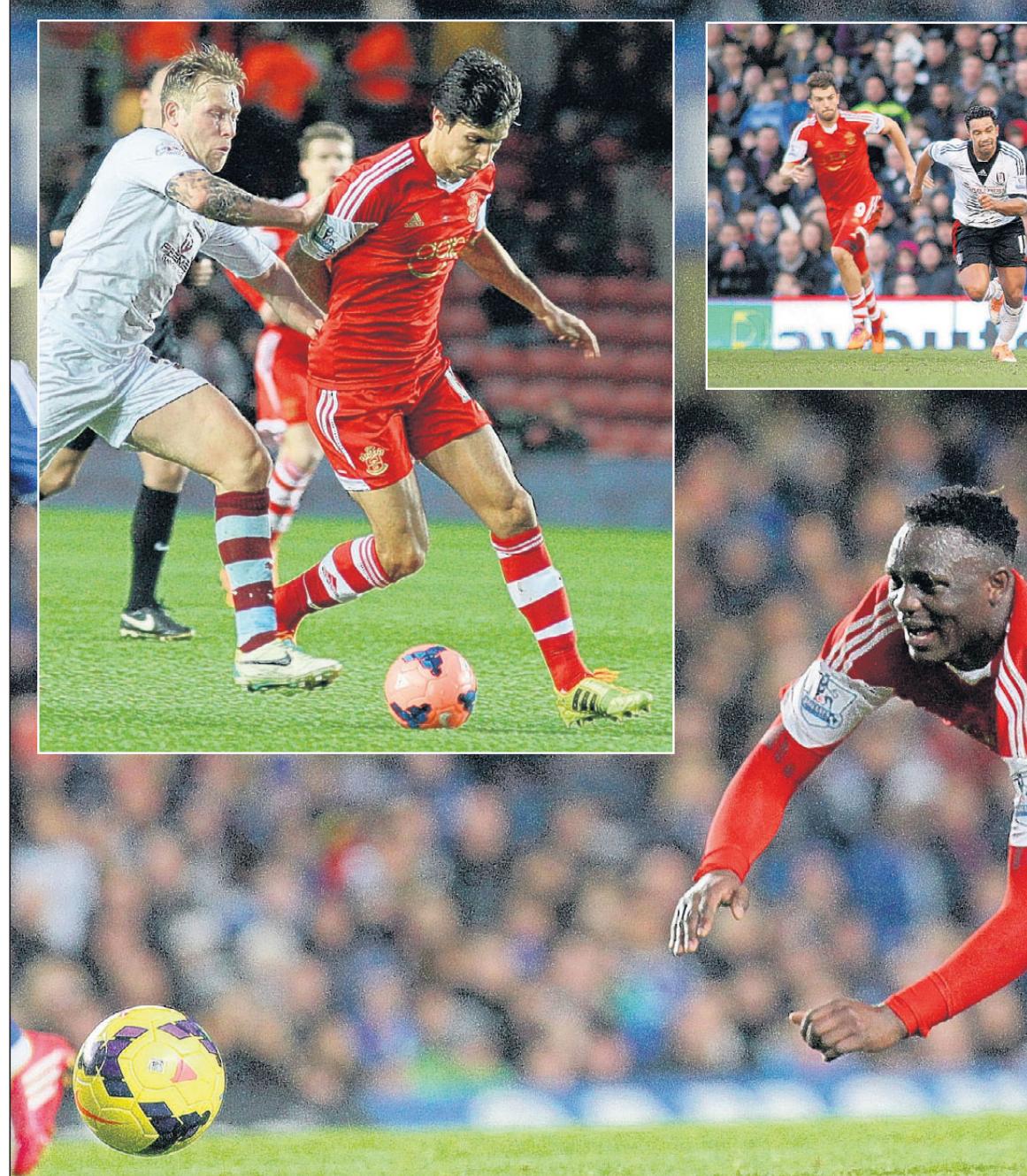
1	Man City	18.1
2	Chelsea	17.1
3	Liverpool	17
4	Tottenham	15.7
5	Newcastle	15.6
6	Everton	15.4
7	Arsenal	14.3
8	Man United	14
9	SAINTS	13.8
10	Swansea	13.7
11	Norwich	13.1
12	West Brom	12.6
13	Sunderland	12.4
14	Aston Villa	12.2
15	Hull	12
16	West Ham	11.5
17	Crystal Palace	11.2
18	Fulham	11
19	Stoke	10.8
20	Cardiff	10.5

SHOTS PER GAME 2012/13

1	Liverpool	19.4
2	Tottenham	17.9
3	Manchester City	17.4
4	Everton	16.7
5	Chelsea	16.5
6	Arsenal	15.7
7	Man United	14.8
8	Newcastle	14
9	SAINTS	13.6
10	Swansea	13.3
11	West Brom	13.3
12	Wigan	13.2
13	QPR	13.2
14	West Ham	12.9
15	Fulham	12.1
16	Aston Villa	11.5
17	Sunderland	11
18	Norwich	10.9
19	Reading	10.4
20	Stoke	10.2

SAINTS are also a more potent force in terms of tackling this season – but, again, only just!

Crystal Palace and Liverpool are the only teams who are averaging more tackles per league game than Saints' 21.8.



Saints actually topped the table last season, with 21.6.

Even the introduction of Victor Wanyama has failed to significantly raise their tackling numbers.

TACKLES PER GAME 2013/14

1	Crystal P	22.4
2	Liverpool	21.9
3	SAINTS	21.8
4	Stoke	21.3
5	Man City	20.2
6	Chelsea	20.1
7	Aston Villa	20.1
8	Tottenham	19.8
9	Arsenal	19.7
10	Everton	19.7
11	Newcastle	19.4
12	Hull	19.4
13	Sunderland	19.1
14	West Brom	18.7
15	Man United	17.9
16	West Ham	17.5
17	Norwich	17.5
18	Swansea	17.3
19	Fulham	17
20	Cardiff	15.9

TACKLES PER GAME 2012/13

1	SAINTS	21.6
2	QPR	21.5
3	Liverpool	20.9
4	Sunderland	20.6
5	Arsenal	19.7
6	Tottenham	19.6
7	Aston Villa	19.5
8	Newcastle	19.3
9	Man United	19.2
10	West Ham	19.2
11	Stoke	19.1
12	Everton	18.9
13	Wigan	18.8
14	Chelsea	18.7
15	West Brom	18.4
16	Swansea	18.1
17	Man City	18
18	Fulham	17.9
19	Norwich	17.8
20	Reading	15.8

SAINTS' high pressing game, which has won them lots of praise this season, is also responsible for seeing their average number of fouls per game rise.

Saints have committed an

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Saints Spotlight

IS PAYING OFF ...



Sports Quiz



MIDFIELD GENERALS: Victor Wanyama, main pic, Jack Cork, far left, and Steven Davis, left, have been the main proponents of Saints' pressing game this season.



average of 12 fouls per game this season, the third highest in the top flight.

Last term they were only 12th in the same list with an average of 10.8 fouls.

FOULS PER GAME 2013/14	
1 Stoke	13.3
2 Aston Villa	13.2
3 SAINTS	12
4 Liverpool	11.7
5 Chelsea	11.7
6 Newcastle	11.7
7 Hull	11.7
8 West Brom	11.6
9 Sunderland	11.1
10 West Ham	11
11 Norwich	11
12 Man United	10.8
13 Crystal Palace	10.6
14 Man City	10.6
15 Tottenham	10.2
16 Everton	10.1
17 Swansea	9.5
18 Fulham	9.5
19 Arsenal	9.3
20 Cardiff	9.3

FOULS PER GAME 2012/13

1 Stoke	12.8
2 West Ham	12.4
3 Man City	12.4
4 Newcastle	12.3
5 Sunderland	12
6 Aston Villa	12
7 Wigan	11.9
8 Everton	11.7
9 West Brom	11.5
10 Norwich	11.5
11 Fulham	10.9
12 SAINTS	10.8
13 Swansea	10.8
14 QPR	10.7

15 Liverpool	10.6
16 Chelsea	10.5
17 Reading	10.4
18 Tottenham	10.3
19 Arsenal	10.1
20 Man United	9.9

SAINTS have already scored more goals from set pieces this season than they did in the whole of 2012/13. But they are still waiting to be given their first own goal by the opposition. That's in

contrast to Swansea, who have benefited from SIX own goals this term!

HOW THEY SCORED 2013/14

	OP	CA	SP	PN	OG
1 Manchester City	44	3	14	3	4
2 Arsenal	37	3	5	3	0
3 Liverpool	35	6	17	5	3
4 Man United	31	0	7	2	1
5 Chelsea	30	2	11	3	2
6 Everton	24	1	11	1	0
7 SAINTS	23	1	11	2	0
8 Newcastle	22	1	6	2	1
9 West Ham	20	2	4	1	1
10 Swansea	20	0	6	1	6
11 West Brom	20	0	6	2	2
12 Stoke	19	0	6	1	1
13 Aston Villa	18	3	4	2	0
14 Tottenham	18	3	8	4	3
15 Norwich	14	1	3	1	0
16 Hull	14	1	6	2	2
17 Sunderland	11	3	7	4	0
18 Cardiff	11	0	8	0	0
19 Fulham	11	1	10	2	2
20 Crystal P	9	1	5	3	0

Key - OP = open play. CA = counter attack. SP = set piece. PN = penalty. OG = own goal.

HOW THEY SCORED 2012/13

	OP	CA	SP	PN	OG
1 Man United	52	2	22	4	6
2 Liverpool	50	1	11	5	4
3 Tottenham	46	6	10	0	4
4 Chelsea	45	3	15	9	3
5 Arsenal	45	7	12	5	3
6 Man City	41	6	14	4	1
7 Swansea	40	2	5	0	0
8 Everton	37	4	10	2	2
9 SAINTS	33	2	8	3	3
10 West Brom	31	5	9	5	3
11 Newcastle	31	2	6	4	2
12 Fulham	29	2	8	6	5
13 Wigan	28	3	13	1	2
14 Aston Villa	28	6	10	3	0
15 West Ham	25	2	12	4	2
16 Norwich	22	0	17	1	1
17 Reading	22	2	13	4	2
18 Sunderland	21	3	11	4	2
19 QPR	19	3	6	1	1
20 Stoke	14	1	15	3	1

Key - OP = open play. CA = counter attack. SP = set piece. PN = penalty. OG = own goal.

SAINTS are not only committing more fouls than they did last season, their players are also being fouled more often.

Everton, though, remain the club whose players are fouled the most.

MOST FOULED 2013/14

1 Everton	13
2 West Brom	12.1
3 Man United	12
4 Sunderland	11.9
5 Chelsea	11.8
6 Liverpool	10.9
7 Arsenal	10.7
8 Fulham	10.7
9 Hull	10.5
10 Tottenham	10.4
11 SAINTS	10.3
12 Swansea	10.2
13 Crystal P	10.1
14 Norwich	9.7
15 Newcastle	9.6
16 Stoke	9.5
17 Aston Villa	9.2
18 West Ham	9.2
19 Cardiff	9.2
20 Man City	8.6

Continued: Page 22

Answers: 1. Gerd Muller; 2. Setanta; 3. Jimmy Jones; 4. Delhi Daredevils; 5. Bradfords; 6. Leeds United; 7. Crotthorpe; 10. Morecambe; 11. Napoli; 12. Leeds United; 13. Juventus; 14. Torino; 15. Palmeiras; 16. Santos and Palmeiras; 17. FC Porto; 18. Monterrey; 19. Kevin Pietersen; 20. Kevin Pietersen; 21. The Netherlands; 22. One; 23. One; 24. Wigan; 25. Barry Hawksinis.

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Saints Spotlight

FIXTURES for the week ahead

Monday, February 17
(7.45pm unless stated)

THE FA CUP WITH BUDWEISER

Fifth Round: Brighton v Hull.

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY

Southern Area Final - Second Leg: Swindon v Peterborough.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: St Albans v Chippenham.
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Division One: Team Solent v Petersfield.

Tuesday, February 18
(7.45pm unless stated)

UNDER-18 INTERNATIONAL

England U18 v Belgium U18 (2pm)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

First Knock-Out Round - First Leg: Bayer Leverkusen v PSG, Man City v Barcelona.

SKY BET LEAGUE

Championship: Sheff Wed v Derby, Wigan v Barnsley, Yeovil v Watford.
League 1: Bradford v Port Vale, Coventry v Carlisle, Crawley Town v Tranmere, Leyton Orient v Stevenage, Milton Keynes Dons v Preston.
League 2: Accrington Stanley v Bury, Exeter v Morecambe, Newport County v Oxford Utd, Rochdale v Burton Albion, Southend v Hartlepools.

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY

Northern Area Final - Second Leg: Chesterfield v Fleetwood Town.

SKRILL CONFERENCE

Premier: Aldershot v Forest Green, Barnet v Grimsby, Cambridge Utd v Wrexham, Dartford v Woking, FC Halifax v Braintree Town, Tamworth v Salisbury.

South: Dorchester v Hayes & Yeading, Dover v Sutton, Farnborough v Basingstoke, Maidenhead v Gosport, Staines v Bromley, Weston-super-Mare v Bath City.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Totton v Hungerford, Bashley v Redditch, Bedford v Corby, Poole Town v Frome, St Neots v Arlesey, Truro v Weymouth.

Division One South & West: Bishops Cleeve v Bridgwater, Evesham v Didcot, Fleet Town v Guildford, North Leigh v Thatcham, Paulton Rovers v Godalming (7.30pm), Taunton v Cirencester, Tiverton v Cinderford (7.30pm), Wimborne v Yate.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

SWL Cup, semi-final: Sholing v Alresford Town (at Winchester City FC)

Premier Division: Fareham v Fawley AFC, Horndean v Hamworthy Utd, Lymington Town v AFC Portchester, Moneyfields v Folland Sports, Whitchurch v Bemerton HH.

Division One: Andover NS v Laverstock & Ford, Hayling Utd v US Portsmouth.

ANDOVER OPEN CUP

First round: Stockbridge v Otterbourne.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: Locks Heath v QK Southampton.

Wednesday, February 19
(7.45pm unless stated)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

First Knock-Out Round - First Leg: AC Milan v Atletico Madrid, Arsenal v Bayern Munich.

SKY BET LEAGUE

Championship: Nottm Forest v Leicester.

League 1: Gillingham v Sheff Utd.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Cambridge City v Banbury, Division One South & West: Swindon Supermarine v Shortwood.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Christchurch v Brockenhurst, Verwood v Blackfield & Langley.

Division One: Amesbury v Ringwood.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Aldermaston v Winchester Castle.

Thursday, February 20
(7.45pm unless stated)

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE

Round of 32 - First Leg: Ajax v SV Red Bull Salzburg (8.05pm), Anzhi Makhachkala v Genk (5pm) Chomoroutes v Lyon (6pm), Dnipro v Spurs (6pm) Dynamo Kiev v Valencia (6pm), Esbjerg v Fiorentina (6pm), FC Porto v Eintracht Frankfurt (8.05), Juventus v Trabzonspor (6pm), Lazri v Ludogorets (8.05pm), Liberac v AZ (6pm), Maccabi Tel-Aviv v Basle (8.05pm), Maribor v Sevilla (8.05pm), PAOK Salonika v Benfica (6pm), Plzen v Shakhtar Donetsk (8.05pm), Real Betis v Rubin Kazan (8.05pm), Swansea v Napoli (8.05pm).

Continued on facing page

Luis is hottest

From page 21

MOST FOULED 2012/13

1	Everton	.....	13.1
2	Sunderland	.....	12.1
3	Chelsea	.....	11.9
4	Wigan	.....	11.6
5	QPR	.....	11.4
6	Reading	.....	11.3
7	Man United	.....	11.1
8	Swansea	.....	11
9	Arsenal	.....	10.8
10	Fulham	.....	10.8
11	Newcastle	.....	10.6
12	Norwich	.....	10.5
13	Tottenham	.....	10.3
14	West Brom	.....	10.3
15	West Ham	.....	9.6
16	Liverpool	.....	9.4
17	Saints	.....	9.4
18	Stoke	.....	9.4
19	Man City	.....	9.2
20	Aston Villa	.....	9.1

LIVERPOOL provide the two top scorers in the Premier League this season.

Luis Suarez has rightly taken most of the plaudits and is still averaging more than a goal a game in 2013/14.

But strike partner Daniel Sturridge is almost averaging a goal a game, having struck 16 times in 16 games plus two sub appearances.

Sturridge is the only Englishman with more Premier League goals than Saints' Jay Rodriguez this term.

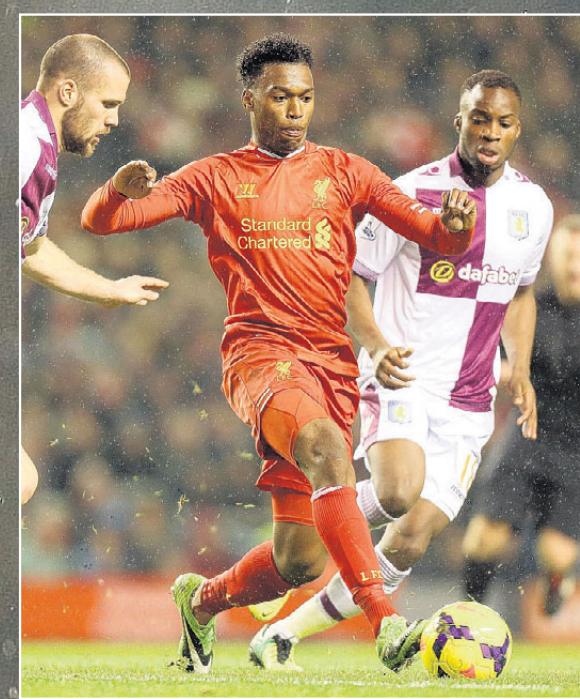
TOP SCORERS 2012/13

		Apps	Gls
Luis Suarez (Liverpool)	21	23	
Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool)	16 (2)	16	
Sergio Agüero (Man City)	15 (2)	15	
Eden Hazard (Chelsea)	25 (1)	12	
Yaya Toure (Man City)	24	12	
Loïc Rémy (Newcastle)	20 (1)	11	
Jay Rodriguez (SAINTS)	23 (3)	10	
Olivier Giroud (Arsenal)	24	10	
R van Persie (Man United)	14 (1)	10	
Álvaro Negredo (Man City)	18 (5)	9	
Romelu Lukaku (Everton)	18 (1)	9	
Wayne Rooney (Man Utd)	19 (2)	9	
Aaron Ramsey (Arsenal)	17 (1)	8	
Danny Welbeck (Man United)	12 (5)	8	
Rickie Lambert (SAINTS)	21 (4)	8	
Wilfried Bony (Swansea)	15 (7)	8	

TOP SCORERS 2012/13

		Apps	Gls
R van Persie (Man United)	35 (3)	26	
Luis Suarez (Liverpool)	33	23	
Gareth Bale (Tottenham)	33	21	
Christian Benteke (Villa)	32 (2)	19	
Michu (Swansea)	35	18	
Romelu Lukaku (WBA)	20 (15)	17	
Dimitar Berbatov (Fulham)	32 (1)	15	
Frank Lampard (Chelsea)	21 (8)	15	
Rickie Lambert (SAINTS)	35 (3)	15	
Edin Dzeko (Man City)	16 (16)	14	
Theo Walcott (Arsenal)	24 (8)	14	
Demba Ba (Newcastle)	19 (1)	13	
Adam Le Fondre (Reading)	11 (23)	12	
Juan Mata (Chelsea)	31 (4)	12	
Santiago Cazorla (Arsenal)	37 (1)	12	
Sergio Agüero (Man City)	22 (8)	12	
Wayne Rooney (Man Utd)	22 (5)	12	
Arouna Koné (Wigan)	32 (2)	11	
Carlos Tévez (Man City)	28 (6)	11	
Jermain Defoe (Tottenham)	27 (7)	11	

IT might not surprise you to learn that Luis Suarez is



GOAL MACHINES: Liverpool pair Luis Suarez, main pic, and Daniel Sturridge, above, are leading the Premier League scoring charts.

averaging more shots on goal than anyone else in the Premier League this season.

He is the only player averaging more than five shots a game.

He was top of the list also last season, with ex-Saint Gareth Bale in second place.

SHOTS PER GAME 2013/14

Luis Suarez (Liverpool)	....	5.5
Sergio Agüero (Man City)	....	4.1
Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool)	....	3.5
Philippe Coutinho (Liverpool)	....	3.4
Robin van Persie (Man Utd)	....	3.4
Loïc Rémy (Newcastle)	....	3.4
Edin Dzeko (Man City)	....	3.4
Yohan Cabaye (Newcastle)	....	3.3
Oliver Giroud (Arsenal)	....	3.3
Wayne Rooney (Man Utd)	....	3.2
Demba Ba (Newcastle)	....	4.5
Robin van Persie (Man Utd)	....	3.7
Andy Carroll (West Ham)	....	3.3
Wayne Rooney (Man United)	....	3.2
Jermain Defoe (Tottenham)	....	3.2
Adel Taarabt (QPR)	....	3.2
Oliver Giroud (Arsenal)	....	3.1
Michu (Swansea)	....	3.1

MORGAN Schneiderlin touches the ball more often than any other Saints player in league action.

The stats show the

Frenchman is averaging 55.4 passes per game – just ahead of defender Jose Fonte.

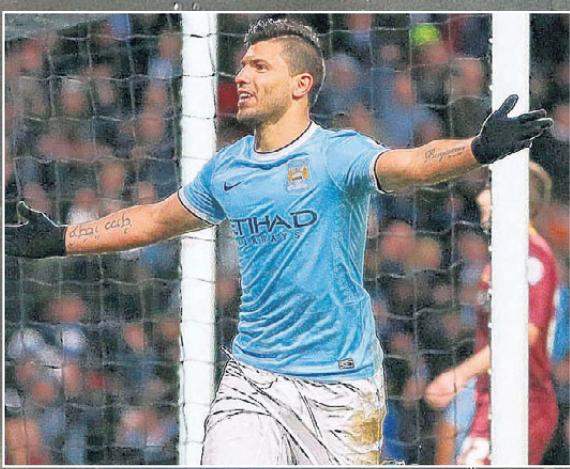
Dejan Lovren and Jos Hooiveld are also high up the list, showing how Saints like to play their way out from the back.

The figures also show that Dani Osvaldo was a peripheral player when he appeared.

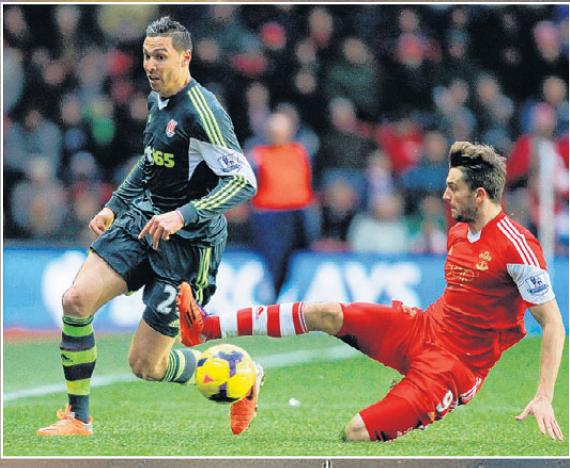
THE PINK & DAILY ECHO: BEST FOR SAINTS NEWS AND VIEWS

Saints Spotlight

OF HOT SHOTS



CONSISTENT: Manchester City's Sergio Aguero and Saints striker Jay Rodriguez are top scorer at their respective clubs so far this season.



The Italian international, loaned out to Juventus in shame, averaged only 17.5 passes per game in a Saints shirt.

Schneiderlin was also the most frequent in possession last season, though he is only making three more passes a game on average this season compared to Fonte's nine.

AVERAGE PASSES PER GAME 2013/14	
Morgan Schneiderlin	55.4
José Fonte	54.3
Jos Hooiveld	54
Dejan Lovren	53.4
Steven Davis	50.4
Victor Wanyama	48
Maya Yoshida	46.4
Jack Cork	44.7
Luke Shaw	39.9
Daniel Fox	38.7
Calum Chambers	38.5
Adam Lallana	37.2
Nathaniel Clyne	36.3

AVERAGE PASSES PER GAME 2012/13	
Rickie Lambert	29.6
James Ward-Prowse	29.4
Artur Boruc	24.9
Kelvin Davis	22.5
Jay Rodriguez	21.9
Paulo Gazzaniga	20
Dani Osvaldo	17.5
Gastón Ramírez	13.6
Sam Gallagher	3.2
Guly	3
José Fonte	.45
Maya Yoshida	.43.7
Steven Davis	.40.9
Nathaniel Clyne	.39.1
Jos Hooiveld	.38.8
Rickie Lambert	.32.4
Adam Lallana	.32.4
Daniel Fox	.32.3
Luke Shaw	.28.6
Gastón Ramírez	.27.4
Jason Puncheon	.26.3
James Ward-Prowse	.20.8
Artur Boruc	.20.5
Kelvin Davis	.20.3
Jay Rodriguez	.17



FIXTURES for the week ahead

From facing page

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division: Fareham Town v Bournemouth Poppies, Romsey v Sholing.

Friday, February 21
(7.45pm unless stated)

SKY BET LEAGUE
League 2: Bristol Rovers v Burton Albion.

Saturday, February 22
(3pm unless stated)

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE
Arsenal v Sunderland, Cardiff v Hull, Chelsea v Everton (12.45pm), Crystal Palace v Man Utd (5.30pm), Man City v Stoke, West Brom v Fulham, West Ham v Southampton.

SKY BET LEAGUE
Championship: Barnsley v Millwall, Blackpool v Birmingham, Bolton v Watford, Brighton v Wigan, Burnley v Nottm Forest, Charlton v QPR, Derby v Bournemouth, Huddersfield v Sheff Wed, Leicester v Ipswich, Middlesbrough v Leeds (12.15pm), Reading v Blackburn, Yeovil v Doncaster.

League 1: Bradford v Milton Keynes Dons, Brentford v Wolverhampton, Carlisle v Rotherham, Colchester v Preston, Leyton Orient v Swindon, Notts County v Shrewsbury, Oldham v Gillingham, Port Vale v Crewe, Sheff Utd v Bristol City, Stevenage v Peterborough, Tranmere v Coventry, Walsall v Crawley Town.

League 2: AFC Wimbledon v Bury, Dag & Red v Plymouth, Exeter v Rochdale, Mansfield v Fleetwood Town, Morecambe v Oxford Utd, Newport County v Cheltenham, Northampton v Hartlepool, Scunthorpe v Portsmouth, Torquay v Accrington Stanley, Wycombe v Chesterfield, York v Southend.

FA TROPHY

Semi-final, second leg: Gosport Borough v Havant & Waterlooville, Grimsby Town v Cambridge Utd.

THE SKRILL CONFERENCE

Premier: Alfreton Town v Gateshead, Dartford v Hereford, Forest Green v Southport, Hyde v Aldershot, Kidderminster v Braintree Town, Lincoln City v Chester FC, Nuneaton v Luton, Tamworth v Wellington, Woking v Macclesfield, Wrexham v Barnet. South: Bath City v Basingstoke, Bromley v Boreham Wood, Chelmsford v Maidenhead, Concord Rangers v Bishops Stortford, Eastbourne Borough v Sutton, Farnborough v Eastleigh, Staines v Whitehawk, Tonbridge Angels v Dorchester.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Totton v St Neots, Banbury v Chesham, Bedford v Weymouth, Cambridge City v Hungerford, Chippenham v Bashley, Frome v Biggleswade, Hitchin v Bideford, Poole Town v Corby, St Albans v Redditch, Stourbridge v Hemel Hempstead, Truro v Arlesey.

Division One South & West: Bishops Cleeve v Stratford, Bridgwater v North Leigh, Cinderford v Mangotsfield, Cirencester v Guildford, Didcot v Taunton, Fleet Town v Clevedon, Godalming v Tiverton, Paulton Rovers v Thatcham, Shortwood v Evesham, Wimborne v Merthyr Town, Yate v Swindon Supermarine.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Alresford v Christchurch, Bournemouth Poppies v Bemerton HH, Downton v Totton & Eling, Fareham Town v Blackfield & Langley, Folland Sports v Fawley AFC, Hamworthy Utd v Moneyfields, Horndean v AFC Portchester, Newport IoW v Sholing, Romsey v Brockenhurst.

Division One: Amesbury v Tedley Calleva, Andover Town v Stockbridge, Fleet Spurs v Andover New Street, Hayling Utd v Laverstock & Ford, New Milton v Cowes Sports, Petersfield v Pewsey Vale, Ringwood v Hythe & Dibden, US Portsmouth v Team Solent.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Stoneham v Overton, Clanfield v Colden Common, Fleetlands v Otterbourne, Headley v Hedge End Rangers, Liphook v Locks Heath, Liss v Paulsgrove, QK Southampton v Baffins Milton Rovers, Winchester Castle v Bournemouth Sports.

Division One: Andover Lions v Durley, Bush Hill v Michelmersh & Timsbury, Four Marks v Hamble Club, Infinity v Upham, Lyndhurst v Broughton.

Combination: Hamble Club v Fleetlands, Hedge End Rangers v AFC Stoneham, Michelmersh & Timsbury v Liss Athletic, Otterbourne v Winchester Castle, Overton v Clanfield, Paulsgrove v Liphook.

BERKS & BUCKS INTERMEDIATE CUP
Semi-final: Chalfont Wasps v AFC Aldermaston.

Continued on page 24

ALL TODAY'S FOOTBALL RESULTS: SEE PAGE 48

Saints Spotlight

Defeat still hurts for England ace Brown

MIKE Brown admits the pain of defeat lingers longer than the satisfaction of victory as England begin the process of restoring Twickenham to fortress status.

Until New Zealand's 30-22 triumph last autumn, Stuart Lancaster's side had reeled off six successive wins at their headquarters in south-west London.

With England scheduled to play all but one of their 2015 World Cup matches at Twickenham, home form has taken on greater significance than ever.

To date their 2014 RBS 6 Nations campaign has been conducted on the road, losing to France and routing Scotland.

The visit of Grand Slam-hunting Ireland on Saturday week is the first of only six fixtures to be staged at Twickenham this year and former Peter Symonds College student Brown is determined to erase the All Blacks' defeat from memory as quickly as possible.

"I do enjoy the wins, obviously, but I remember the losses more. I want to win every game but losing hurts a lot," the Harlequins full-back, pictured, said.

"Whenever you lose it's a bad memory, a scar you want to put right."

"It's like we felt after losing to France two weeks ago – we wanted to put it right against Scotland. That's what we'll continue to do."

"For me a loss is a loss. I just hate losing, so losing anywhere is not right."

"It's about how you react to those losses that defines you as a team. It's about learning from those experiences, good and bad."

England would have been chasing the Grand Slam themselves but for a traumatic defeat in Paris where substitute wing Gael Fickou danced over for a late match-winning try.

A polished 20-0 demolition of Scotland – lacking only a more emphatic scoreline – has revived spirits, but the wound inflicted in the Stade de France still festers.

"Some defeats really stand out – like that France game. It was massively frustrating to lose in the way we did," Brown aid.

"Giving them two tries and a head start like we did...it was the same against New Zealand. Things like that niggle away at you."

"You seem to look at the little mistakes you make before you look at the good stuff you did. Losses definitely niggle away at you."



From page 23

SHOTS PER GAME 2013/14

Jay Rodriguez	2.7
Rickie Lambert	2.6
Dani Osvaldo	2.2
Adam Lallana	1.7
Steven Davis	1.1
Morgan Schneiderlin	1.1
Dejan Lovren	0.9
Victor Wanyama	0.9
Gastón Ramírez	0.8
Sam Gallagher	0.8
Luke Shaw	0.7
Jose Fonte	0.6
Jack Cork	0.6
James Ward-Prowse	0.5
Daniel Fox	0.3
Jos Hooiveld	0.3
Calum Chambers	0.2
Nathaniel Clyne	0.2
Guly	0.2
Maya Yoshida	0.1

SHOTS PER GAME 2012/13

Jay Rodriguez	2.5
Rickie Lambert	2.2
Jason Puncheon	2.1
Gastón Ramírez	2.1
Adam Lallana	1.7
Guly	0.9
Steven Davis	0.8
Morgan Schneiderlin	0.8
Emmanuel Mayuka	0.7
Jose Fonte	0.6
James Ward-Prowse	0.5
Jack Cork	0.5
Daniel Fox	0.4
Jos Hooiveld	0.4
Luke Shaw	0.4
Maya Yoshida	0.3
Nathaniel Clyne	0.2

Morgan Schneiderlin is again one of the most consistent tacklers in the Premier League for the second season running.

PREMIER LEAGUE AVERAGE TACKLES PER GAME 2013/14

Claudio Yacob (West Brom)	4.3
M Schneiderlin (SAINTS)	4
Lucas Leiva (Liverpool)	3.9
Pablo Zabaleta (Man City)	3.9
Erik Pieters (Stoke)	3.7
Aaron Ramsey (Arsenal)	3.7
César Azpilicueta (Chelsea)	3.6
Cheick Tiote (Newcastle)	3.5
Joel Ward (Crystal P)	3.5
James McCarthy (Everton)	3.4

PREMIER LEAGUE AVERAGE TACKLES PER GAME 2012/13

Lucas Leiva (Liverpool)	4.7
M Schneiderlin (SAINTS)	4.1
Pablo Zabaleta (Man City)	3.8
Steve Sidwell (Fulham)	3.8
Claudio Yacob (West Brom)	3.6
Mark Noble (West Ham)	3.6
Mohamed Diame (West Ham)	3.5
Sandro (Tottenham)	3.3
Chico (Swansea)	3.3
Gaël Clichy (Man City)	3.2

Morgan Schneiderlin is well clear in the list of Saints' most consistent tacklers in 2013/14, as he was in 2012/13.

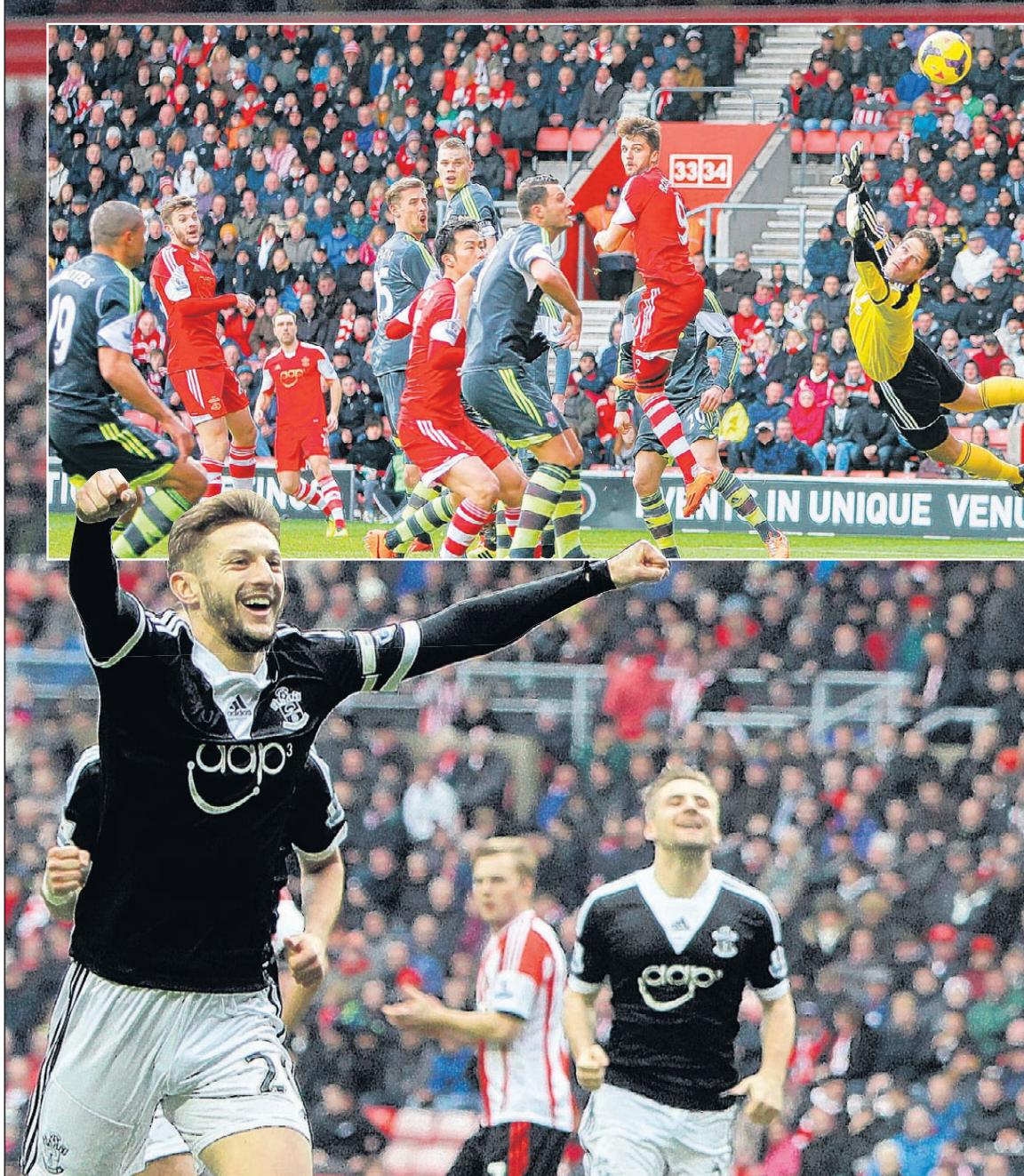
SAINTS AVERAGE TACKLES PER GAME 2013/14

Morgan Schneiderlin	.4
Victor Wanyama	2.9
Jos Hooiveld	2.7
Calum Chambers	2.4
Jack Cork	2.4
Dejan Lovren	2.1
Nathaniel Clyne	2.1
Jose Fonte	2.1
Luke Shaw	1.9

SAINTS AVERAGE TACKLES PER GAME 2012/13



HOW SAINTS COME



IN FINE FORM: Jay Rodriguez and Adam Lallana, main picture, celebrate the former's goal at Sunderland last

Adam Lallana	1.7	Morgan Schneiderlin	4.1	Frazer Richardson	0.8
Steven Davis	1.5	Nathaniel Clyne	2.8	Guly	0.9
Maya Yoshida	1.3	Adam Lallana	2.4	Steve De Ridder	0.8
Jay Rodriguez	1.3	Luke Shaw	2.2	Ben Reeves	0.7
Daniel Fox	1.3	Jack Cork	1.9	James Ward-Prowse	0.6
Rickie Lambert	0.2	Maya Yoshida	1.8	Rickie Lambert	0.4
James Ward-Prowse	1.2	Steven Davis	1.8	Richard Chaplow	0.3
Dani Osvaldo	0.7	Jason Puncheon	1.7	Paulo Gazzaniga	0.1
Gastón Ramírez	0.6	Jos Hooiveld	1.5	Emmanuel Mayuka	0.1
Guly	0.3	Jose Fonte	1.5		
Rickie Lambert	0.2	Gastón Ramírez	1.5		
		Daniel Fox	1.4		
		Jay Rodriguez	0.9		

THE PINK & DAILY ECHO: BEST

He is averaging 2.1 fouls per game, though that is still down on the 2.6 average racked up by Marouane Fellaini last season.

PREMIER LEAGUE FOULS PER GAME 2013/14
Victor Wanyama (SAINTS) ... 2.1
Lucas Leiva (Liverpool) 2
Ramires (Chelsea) 2
Shane Long (West Brom) ... 1.9
Cheick Tiote (Newcastle) ... 1.9

Victor Wanyama is the most persistent foul in the Premier League this season.

Saints Spotlight

PARE TO 2012/13



last month, while Rickie Lambert, inset, hammers in a free kick against Stoke City last weekend at St Mary's.

PREMIER LEAGUE FOULS PER GAME 2012/13

Karim El Ahmadi (Aston V)	1.9	Steve Sidwell (Fulham)	2	Rickie Lambert	1.2
Luis Suarez (Liverpool)	1.9	Christian Benteke (Villa)	1.9	Calum Chambers	1.1
Fernandinho (Man City)	1.9	Charlie Adam (Stoke)	1.9	Jos Hooiveld	1
Leroy Fer (Norwich)	1.6	Bradley Johnson (Norwich)	1.9	Adam Lallana	1
Mikel Arteta (Arsenal)	2.2	Kevin Nolan (West Ham)	1.8	Daniel Fox	1
Cheick Tiote (Newcastle)	2.4	M Schneiderlin (SAINTS)	1.8	Jack Cork	0.9
Grant Holt (Norwich)	2.4	Stéphane Mbia (QPR)	1.8	Jose Fonte	0.9
Marouane Fellaini (Everton)	2.6			Jay Rodriguez	0.9
Daniel Agger (Liverpool)	2.6			Nathaniel Clyne	0.8
Mikel Arteta (Arsenal)	2.2			Steven Davis	0.8
Claudio Yacob (West Brom)	2			Gastón Ramírez	0.8
Lucas Leiva (Liverpool)	2			Dejan Lovren	0.7
				Luke Shaw	0.6

SAINTS FOULS PER GAME 2013/14

Victor Wanyama	2.1
Morgan Schneiderlin	1.6
Dani Osvaldo	1.2

SAINTS FOULS PER GAME

Victor Wanyama	2.1
Morgan Schneiderlin	1.6
Dani Osvaldo	1.2

SAINTS FOULS PER GAME

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Dani Osvaldo	1.2

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SAINTS FOULS PER GAME

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SAINTS FOULS PER GAME

Victor Wanyama	2.1
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Dani Osvaldo	1.2

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SAINTS FOULS PER GAME

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Dani Osvaldo	1.2

SAINTS FOULS PER GAME

Victor Wanyama	2.1
Morgan Schneiderlin	1.6
Dani Osvaldo	1.2

SAINTS FOULS PER GAME

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Non-league Football

Non-league News

Town get game time

FAREHAM Town's Cams Alders pitch was out of action yet again on Tuesday night, but Matt Parr's men still managed to shake some of the rustiness out of their legs. Following the postponement of their Sydenhams Premier fixture against Lymington Town, the Reds arranged a training game with US Portsmouth on their 3G pitch – and came out 3-2 victors.

Mark Wheeler, John Wilson and Ashley Tattersall put Fareham in command before the home side hit back with two late goals.

The Reds also hit the bar twice, had two cleared off the line and another goal ruled out for offside.

Manager Parr, whose side have not yet reached the halfway point of their league programme, said: "It was pleasing to get a normal match into the lads to help keep us ticking over while the weather puts paid to any hope of catching up on our backlog of matches.

"I tried a few different things – some worked, some didn't – but the players, while tired, all did what was asked of them."

Luke who's back ...

FRONTMAN Luke Burbidge has returned to Poole Town after a spell with Dorset neighbours Weymouth.

Burbidge completed a controversial summer switch to the Terras despite twice committing his future to Poole following their Southern One South & West title success last season.

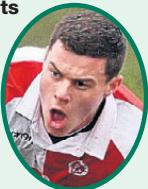
But Dolphins boss Tom Killick wants fans to forgive and forget and give Burbidge, right, their full backing as he joins the club's Southern Premier promotion push.

"Luke still has a real affinity to the club and I think he now realises how much he missed being here," said Killick.

"I hope supporters realise the important thing is that we have an excellent player back who can help us achieve our aims for the season.

"I was very sad when Luke went in the first place and, as you would expect, I have kept an eye on his performances ever since.

"His decision to come back is a big advantage for us."



PRIORY TEENAGER ON VILLA'S RADAR

JOSH Hanratty is primed to be the next Football League prospect rolling off the Christchurch conveyor belt.

The 16-year-old central midfielder only made his first-team debut for Priory in November but has started six of their last seven fixtures after impressing from the bench in his first game.

Already AFC Bournemouth and Aston Villa are monitoring his progress and the youngster – who spent a year with Saints Academy before a brief spell with Poole Town's under-18s – has been dubbed “a special talent” by Priory boss Michael Cuffie.

“The biggest compliment I can pay Josh is that, at 16, he has come in and improved our side. Several people have noticed his quality,” said Cuffie.

“To be honest, I hope he is not here next season because, if he isn't, it will mean he has moved on to bigger and better things.

“He deserves this chance and it is testament to the club that we give young players like Josh a platform to play on.”

Sydenhams Premier outfit Christchurch



TALENT: Josh Hanratty, right.

boast a long, proud history of bringing talent through with the likes of Jody Craddock (ex-Sunderland and Wolves), Justin Keeler (ex-AFC Bournemouth), Ben Dickenson (Brighton & Hove Albion), Eastleigh's Michael Green (ex-Port Vale) and Harry Cornick (AFC Bournemouth) all progressing to Football League clubs.

Villa were tracking Hanratty prior to his stint at St Mary's, which ended at the end of

2012, and his performances for Christchurch placed him firmly on Cherries' radar before the recent spate of bad weather intervened.

Josh's father Lee Hanratty had some complimentary words for Christchurch boss Cuffie.

He said: “It takes guts to play someone so young in senior football and, while Josh hasn't let Christchurch down, we are still very grateful that Mike was brave enough to take a chance.”

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM, JOIN 'EM

MATT Austin, Romsey Town's top scorer last season, has signed for Stuart Doling's Lymington Town.

Having featured regularly for Romsey in 2012/13, Southampton-based Austin joined Sydenhams Premier rivals Downton in the summer.

He netted just twice in 25 Wessex appearances for the Robins – but, significantly, both goals were against his new club.

Lymington beat Downton 4-2 in early November, but Austin's contribution did not go unnoticed by Doling who reckons the industrious former Sholing and Riverside frontman will make a useful addition to his squad.

“Matt scored a couple against us and he's an honest, hard-working player,” said Doling. “Some of our lads already know him, so he'll fit in well here.

“We've got an abundance of players to pick from now, which is nice. And, unlike some clubs, we're not miles behind with our fixtures so we can look at getting the squad ready for next season.

“Sam Floyd's due back in training and we should get (Brazilian mid-

Wendy Gee
wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk
NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

fielder) Carlos Geteski back next week.”

While every other Wessex game was washed out last weekend, Lymington's Sports Ground pitch somehow survived another week of torrential rain to stage a 2-2 draw with Brockenhurst in the Sydenhams Premier.

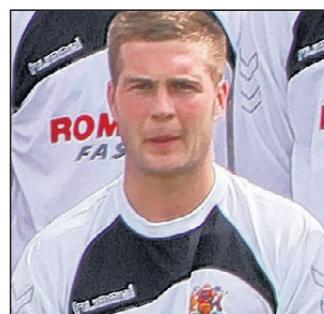
“I was up there at nine o'clock on Saturday morning and the pitch was fine,” said Doling. “It was windy and it drains well and, because we were playing (neighbours) Brockenhurst, we knew we could give it that extra bit of time.

“We desperately wanted to play because we hadn't had a game in ages.”

Heading into stoppage time it looked as if Lymington's efforts would all be in vain with Brock leading 2-1.

But James Davis struck just in the nick of time to salvage a share of the points – even though Town had been reduced to ten men following a second yellow card for Darren Ritchie.

“Both teams hadn't played for a



MOVE: Matt Austin.

while, the wind was a factor, and we looked very rusty indeed in the first half,” Doling admitted.

“We fell behind to a penalty in the first half, but I couldn't believe it when Brock scored again after we'd equalised.

“We had two cleared off the line and I could only ever see us winning it.”

Both Doling and Brock boss Pat McManus agreed that Ritchie was a tad hard done by with his first booking for handball which allowed Mark Barker to fire the Badgers ahead from the penalty spot.

Ex-Sholing centre-back Mitch Fear

headed Town back on terms after the break only for Harry Jeffries to edge the visitors in front again with a header from Brad Magookin's corner.

“Matey (Jeffries) climbed on the shoulders of our lad to head that one in,” said Doling, who must have feared the worst when Ritchie was subsequently dismissed.

Davis's late strike saved the day, but this time it was Brock boss McManus who felt aggrieved, claiming Town's late leveller should not have been given.

“It came from a long clearance and was a mile offside,” he said.

“But on the flip side of that was the penalty decision awarded against them. It was handball, but it hit Darren Ritchie at point-blank range and was not deliberate. That really was harsh.

“All this assessing is taking the common sense out of the game,” McManus added. “There were six players booked in 25 minutes and no one had made a tackle! Unfortunately for Darren Ritchie, he got the worst of it and got sent off.”

Lymington missed out on the chance to build on Saturday's result when Tuesday's league game at waterlogged Fareham Town was inevitably postponed.

Non-league Football



YOUNG GUNS FIRE FOR FOLLANDS



GOOD FORM:
Mike Turvey, left.

DANNY Bowers says his improving young side have lacked one vital ingredient this season – consistency.

But having watched the Planemakers see off league leaders Winchester City 2-0 on Tuesday to notch their third Sydenhams Premier win in a row, the indications are that there could be considerably more ups than downs in the weeks and months to come, writes WENDY GEE.

Having struck early when Ryan Long took advantage of City's hesitancy in dealing with Pip Nolan's long throw, the Planemakers never looked back.

Coping well with Winchester's slick, passing football, they killed the game off with about 20 minutes remaining when Long and the outstanding Mike Turvey combined on the right. Long crossed and skipper Jamie Barron did the rest, smashing a superb, left-foot finish into the bottom corner from just inside the box.

"To be fair, it helped that we scored in less than a minute," said Bowers.

"Winchester passed the ball fantastically well and played a lot of football, but suddenly we've become a lot more compact and hard to beat."

"I felt that if Winchester got one back, they could push us with the ability they've got."

"But credit to our lads, we're a new, young side and we're getting stronger and stronger."

"Mike Turvey was outstanding. He scared the life out of them for 70 minutes and caused havoc. In fact he should have had a penalty when he was brought down a good three or four yards inside the area, but a free kick was given on the edge of the box."

Victory edged Follands up to seventh and Bowers can't help thinking that with a bit more consistency, they could have been pushing the likes of Blackfield and Alresford towards the top.

"If we hadn't had such a bad day at Verwood (a 2-1 defeat) and had three points taken off us (for fielding an ineligible player) for the Lympstone game, we could have been in touching distance of the top three," he said.

"We've got a side packed with youngsters who are prepared to run through brick walls and the only down

side is that they're fantastic at times and then another time they're not on the money."

"But you will get that with youngsters."

"When we beat Blackfield & Langley 5-0 everyone said that was a freak result, but now we've won three in a row against Bemerton, Newport and a really good Winchester side."

"It's no coincidence that we've been able to put the same side out three games in a row and it's good to have that bit of continuity."

"It was nice to get the game on too. Fair play to the ground staff for all their hard work."



Bowers: It's not the death knell for Gregory's Sports stay

FOLLAND Sports have dual-signed long-term target Ben Kneller from Hampshire Premier neighbours Hamble Club to assist with their Sydenhams Premier Division run-in.

But manager Danny Bowers says that is not a cue for fellow forward Richard Gregory to leave Follands Park after inter-

est from Blackfield & Langley.

Bowers confirmed: "Blackfield have come in for Richard, but I can't see him leaving at this stage."

"I think the link is that Reggie Palmer, the Blackfield goalkeeping coach, knows him, but Richard's only recently come back to us (after working away) and he's just

coming back to full fitness.

"He's a big part of things at Follands and I can't see him going."

With plenty more matches still to squeeze in, Bowers is delighted to have Kneller on board.

Kneller looked an outstanding prospect for Winchester City until a serious knee injury

scuppered his progress.

But Bowers will never forget the day he destroyed Follands almost single-handedly. "There was one game during Paul McCarthy's time at Winchester when we were 4-0 down by half-time and Ben absolutely ran the show," he recalled.

"I've wanted to sign him for a long time."

"Ben's local and he's a top lad as well. He's steered clear of injury for a while now."

Kneller is already a well-known face in the Follands Park camp. As manager of the all-conquering Sunday morning side Knighton Arms, he has already worked with the likes of goalkeeper Ryan Gosney and striker Daniel Mason.

Non-league News

Ex-Saint's comeback

EX-SAINT Steve Basham is on the comeback trail after spending three months on the sidelines for Oxford City. The 36-year-old striker has been out of action since City's 3-2 Conference

North loss at Harrogate Town in November, but is raring to go again after recovering from a calf problem.

Southampton-born Basham – a Saint from 1994-1999 – has been back in training for more than a week.



Roberts ban halved

JORDAN Roberts, whose sending-off proved a turning point in Aldershot Town's FA Trophy quarter-final defeat at Havant & Waterlooville, has had his four-match ban effectively halved.

The 20-year-old was sent off in the 37th minute following an off-the-ball clash with Havant's Perry Ryan.

On reviewing the video evidence, the north Hampshire club launched a successful appeal against the length of the ban. As a result, Roberts' suspension was cut to two matches – one for the Havant incident and an additional one for his red card against Braintree in November.

Shots chairman Shahid Azeem said: "Having reviewed the video evidence from all angles, the club felt it was an extremely harsh sending-off and that Jordan's punishment was excessive. We are therefore delighted that view has been shared by the FA's disciplinary committee."

Stags' home comfort
AFC TOTTENHAM have gained home advantage in their Russell Cotes Cup quarter-final.

Following a second postponement of their last-eight tie at AFC Portchester, the match has been switched to the Testwood Stadium on Tuesday, February 25 (7.45pm).

However, if the Stags have to rearrange a Southern League game for that night, an alternative cup date will have to be agreed.

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Semi-final re-arranged
The Sydenhams Wessex League Cup semi-final between Whitchurch United and Petersfield Town was postponed once again on Tuesday due to a water-logged pitch at Alresford.

The tie has been rescheduled for Tuesday, March 11, once again at Alresford's Arlebury Park HQ.

All being well with the weather, the other semi-final between Sholing and holders Alresford will take place this Tuesday (February 18) at Winchester's Denplan City Ground.

Ex-Spitfire on move
FORMER Eastleigh wideman Ashley Carew has joined Whitehawk on a month's loan from Skrill Conference South rivals Dover Athletic.

The 28-year-old, who joined Dover in August last year, has found playing opportunities limited at Crabble in recent months.

He joins a Whitehawk side battling to survive at Step 2 level following promotion from the Ryman League last term.



Carew, pictured, joined Eastleigh from Barnet, initially on loan, in January 2009 and was part of the side which, under Ian Baird's guidance, achieved a highest ever third-placed finish in the Conference South.

Since departing for Bromley at the end of that season, the Lambeth-born midfielder has done the rounds with Ebbsfleet, Cambridge United and Carshalton Athletic.

He was released after a second spell with Ebbsfleet in May 2013.

Foster signs for Town
VERWOOD Town have completed the signing of experienced frontman Carl Foster. Initially registered with Christchurch, Foster left Michael Cuffie's side for Lympington Town in December and has now moved across the Forest to Adie Arnold's Potters.

Foster had two spells at Christchurch, starting in the 2008/09 season. In between he played for Ringwood Town.



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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

AS THE Sydenhams Premier season heads towards a contested finale, Brockenhurst boss Pat McManus has no concerns about the fitness of his team.

Despite a six-week weather enforced lay-off, the Badgers looked sharp and full of running in last Saturday's 2-2 draw at Lymington Town.

McManus, pictured above, was so convinced that that game too would fall by the wayside that he had booked and paid for a two-hour training session on Team Solent's 3G surface to stop rustiness setting in.

Remarkably, though, the Lymington pitch survived the rain and, from the off, it was evident to McManus that his players had been keeping themselves in shape.

He said: "What pleased me most about the game was that we didn't look like a side that hadn't played for six weeks, and that's testament to the way the lads have trained and looked after themselves."

"We've been doing pre-season type training to keep everyone as fit and sharp as possible. We've put on some really hard sessions to make sure there's no slipping back and there was nothing sluggish about us at all."

"We dominated the first half against the wind and should have gone in more than 1-0 up."

"We were a bit wasteful but, from a football and fitness point of view, I was very pleased."

Brock twice took the lead through Mark Barker (penalty) and Harry Jeffries only to be pegged back each time by Mitch Fear and James Davis – Town's second equaliser arriving in stoppage-time after they had been reduced to ten men.

McManus was convinced Lymington's second was offside and felt that, with a tad more experience, young goalkeeper Nathan Goodger could have done better with the first.

He said: "We've got a problem at the moment with (first-choice No1) Scott O'Rourke injuring himself at work and rupturing tendons in his arm."

"We signed Nathan from AFC Totton, but he's only 18 and, although some parts of his game are very, very good, some will only come with age and experience of playing games."

"No one wants to slaughter him because he's doing a good job and has made some great saves, but he had a bit of a baptism of fire when we conceded five against Sholing and it's not been easy for him."

MCMANUS LAUDS BROCK FITNESS



NUMBER ONE: Ross Flitney displaced Jack Dovey from Eastleigh's first team.

"Nathan's a really good shot-stopper, but he's got more to learn about when to come for the ball and when to stay on his line."

"At 18, he's not quite up to speed yet with certain aspects of the game and, for Lymington's first goal, the ball should have been the keeper's."

"But, saying that, he made up for it with a couple of very good saves and, based on chances, we should have won the game."

Despite losing key players like Dave Marden, Scott Joyce, Warren Kenna and Rudy Plummer this season, Brock have settled comfortably into mid-table and may yet climb higher.

"If we can just improve where we need to, there's no reason we can't

finish top-ten," said McManus.

"The problem we have is that we're equally capable of taking points off a top-five side as we are of dropping points against a bottom-five side."

Although Brock are not particularly strong numbers-wise, McManus is happy with how his squad is shaping up after so much disruption earlier in the season.

"Zac Pickett, an ex-Sholing reserve centre-half who went to Stockbridge, made his debut against Lymington and Mike Thomas, an ex-Team Solent player, came on," he said.

"We're about to tie up the signing of Tom Ashton, an attacking midfielder from Sholing, and Tom Hill, who we lost to an ankle ligament injury in November, is only a couple of weeks

away from fitness.

"Tom (Hill) plays off the front two and has got that bit of quality we've been missing."

McManus's biggest worry now is that continued wet weather will force too many fixtures to be jammed into the final few weeks of the season.

"For clubs like ours who don't have a massive pool of players to call on, playing four games in eight days would be difficult," he admitted. "All you need is two or three injured and two or three working and it causes problems."

Rain stopped play yet again on Wednesday, wiping out Brock's scheduled home game against Bemerton Heath Harlequins.

CALL NON-LEAGUE WRITER WENDY GEE ON 023 8042 4483

Non-league Football



ON TARGET:
Michael Dixon.

Town given boost by Lucas aid

MANAGER Neil Benson gave thanks for a "superb" pitch at the Portway Stadium as his Andover Town side romped five points clear at the Sydenhams One summit on Tuesday.

Thanks to the hard work and expertise of groundsman Tom Lucas, Town's was the only match in the division to go ahead.

And the league leaders took full advantage, thumping Amesbury 4-0 through Michael Dixon, Oliver Yates, Tom Riddell and Alex Dockree.

"The superb pitch was testament to the expertise of Tom Lucas who looks after the pitches for Southampton at Marchwood and St Mary's. Without him we would be struggling to play any games," admitted Benson.

"We have scored 22 goals, kept four clean sheets and taken full points since moving to the Portway, which is table-topping stuff."

The only down side for Andover was the physical nature of the game that left them with a few walking wounded.

"It was a local derby and was keenly fought, which is what we expected," said Benson.

"Young Riddell ended up in hospital and Claudio (Herbert), Lewis (Benson) and Dixon were all clattered."

Non-league News

Brockway steps up
LONG-SERVING Amesbury Town player Tyler Brockway has stepped up a level to the Sydenhams Premier Division. The defender, who first joined Amesbury in the 2010/11 season, has signed for Ian Chalk at fellow Wiltshire club Bemerton Heath Harlequins.

Hindmarsh switch
GOALKEEPER Tom Hindmarsh is on the move.

The 23-year-old has made the switch from Whitchurch United to Sydenhams One outfit Tadley Calleva.

Basingstoke-based Hindmarsh spent two-and-a-half years at Whitchurch, having joined the Jam Boys from AFC Aldermaston.

He played an integral part in United's promotion-winning Sydenhams One campaign last term and has made 22 Wessex starts for the Jam Boys this season, winning two man-of-the-match awards.

Bournemouth to Boro'
GOSPORT Borough have taken Josh Carmichael on a month's loan from AFC Bournemouth.

The 19-year-old Poole-born midfielder, below, will be useful addition to Alex Pike's squad, who are still fighting for three cups – the FA Trophy, Hampshire FA Senior and Russell Cotes – as well as Skrill Conference South survival.



Carmichael, who represented Scotland at under-16 level, joined the Cherries at the age of ten and signed a two-year scholarship as a 16-year-old.

He made his Football League debut in 2011, going on as a first-half substitute in a 2-0 win over Exeter City. He made the starting 11 for the first time a year later away at Crawley Town.

Craig to stand down
IAN Craig, the Sydenhams Wessex League's hard-working and highly efficient fixtures secretary, is standing down at the end of the season.

Anybody interested in replacing him should contact league secretary John Gorman on 01256 770059 or at leagues-secretary.wessexleague@gmail.com

GAZZARD RALLIES BASH IN HOPE OF DROP REPRIEVE

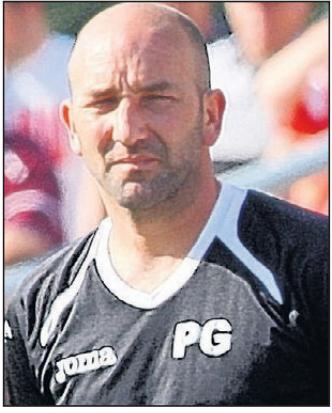
PAUL Gazzard has urged Bashley to put themselves in pole position for a relegation reprieve after accepting that the orthodox route to survival is probably beyond his side.

With just 12 points to show for their efforts in the Calor Southern Premier Division this season, Bash would have to bridge a 16-point chasm in their final 18 games to achieve fourth-to-bottom safety, writes WENDY GEE.

However, the New Forest club went level on points with AFC Totton after a 3-1 midweek win over Chippenham and are within touching distance of Bedford Town – with both relegation rivals still to visit Bashley Road.

And with reprieves from relegation becoming common place these days, Gazzard has called on his troops to soldier on and finish as high as possible.

One of the four relegation spots



PAUL GAZZARD

has already been rendered redundant by the demise of Hinckley and it's not beyond the realms of possibility that another club might follow suit.

Co-boss Gazzard said: "Getting ourselves up to fourth-to-bottom is going to be a big ask now, but I am convinced we will not finish bottom.

"With the way we are playing, I believe we will finish above Totton and Bedford which will, hopefully, put us in the best possible position to get a reprieve if there is one going.

"All we can do is pick up as many points as we can and hope for a reprieve.

"Hemel Hempstead had one a couple of seasons ago and haven't looked back since.

"We have to keep going and hold on to that hope."

Totton's former Bashley boss Steve Riley, meanwhile, is still targeting a fourth-to-bottom finish for his improving, young Stags – even though Bashley's midweek win dumped them to the foot of the table on goal difference.

He has strengthened his squad with the addition of midfielder Liam Gilbert from Horndean – plus

AFC Bournemouth loan duo Harrison Gilkes and Lewis Lindsay – and is fully pumped up for the challenge ahead.

"Mathematically we are still in with a shout," he insisted.

"We are all up for the challenge and hopefully we can turn a corner and get some wins that will lift everyone's confidence around the club.

"Looking around the team, we have strength in depth to deal with the midweek and weekend fixtures throughout February and March.

"It is good to have selection headaches, something we haven't had much of of late. If anyone is carrying a slight knock, we can rest these players, which is a luxury we haven't had recently.

"The team is feeling positive and it's a good place to be."

Jack Odam – a product of the AFC Totton youth system – scored twice for Bash against Chippenham with ex-Cherries defender Brad Strickland also on target.

TODAY'S NON-LEAGUE RESULTS – SEE BACK PAGE

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Bristow pitch surprise BASINGSTOKE Town boss Jason Bristow is surprised that more consideration has not been given to accepting artificial pitches into the Football Conference.

Bristow, pictured below, attended the recent extraordinary general meeting when a proposal to allow 3G pitches in at Step 1 and 2 level was defeated by 21 votes to 11.

And, while admitting to be a traditionalist, the Camrose chief was surprised there was not a bigger debate on the subject.

"Nobody really spoke up in favour of the new artificial pitches," he said. "It just seemed to go straight to a vote."

"I was also surprised that it was voted down by such a big margin, especially as the meeting took place at a time when we were struggling with the weather."

Having seen their trip to Hayes & Yeading United postponed last Saturday, Town face a hectic schedule in the remaining weeks of the season.

Heading into this weekend, they still had 18 Conference South games and a Hampshire Senior Cup semi-final to play with just 11 Saturdays and ten midweek dates available.

"It's going to be a long haul for most clubs and there could be a few more games called off yet," said Bristow.

"It's down to the club secretaries to get together and see if they can find a solution.

"There are several clubs that have already had to put in some Thursday fixtures to ensure all games will be played.

"With the weather not looking like letting up yet, there may be more games that fall foul of waterlogged pitches and cause more problems," he warned.

Mortimer stint to end ROY Mortimer is stepping down as Verwood Town secretary at the end of the season after eight years in the post.

The Sydenhams Premier Division outfit are seeking someone to take over the role, which is critical to the running of the club.

Verwood are looking for someone who is well organised and familiar with email and general Internet use.

The current secretary will be around to assist with the handover and the new secretary will be able to count on the support of Verwood's experienced team of committee members.

For more information please contact Verwood chairman Steve Jefferis at stevej43@gmail.com or on 07896 627060.

NO GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

REEVES CONFIDENT TOWN WILL MEET GRADING DEADLINE



Killick refuses to play blame game over points deduction

MANAGER Tom Killick has refused to point the finger of blame over the three-point deduction that has damaged Poole Town's Southern Premier Division promotion push.

The Dolphins were penalised for fielding suspended defender Sam Clarke, pictured, in their 2-1 victory over Redditch United on Saturday, December 14.

Club officials flagged up the error to The Football Association as soon as it came to light but had the points earned from that fixture docked as well as being hit with a £250 fine.

It came as a bitter blow to Poole, who also have a major fixture backlog to contend with, but Killick said: "One of our strengths is that we have a resilient bunch (of players) and they will deal with it in the right way.

"It is important we do not dwell on it too much because it is easy to let it affect you.

"We have a very ambitious, driven group who want to get out of this league, so they were always going to take the news badly.

"But I think it is important not to get too carried away with it. What happened should not have happened, but it is not a terminal blow. We are still more than capable of securing a place in the play-offs and my belief has not wavered at all.

"Personally I have been responsible for us losing points with the decisions I have made, so have individual players. While it was an administrative disaster that cost us these points, we have to treat it in the same manner."

More points went begging for Poole on Tuesday when they were held 0-0 by ten-man Hungerford.

Hungerford's Matt Day was dismissed in the second half but the Dolphins drew a blank in a match played at Wimborne Town's Cuthbury home due to Tatnam being waterlogged.

Poole got permission to switch the game to Wimborne because, prior to Tuesday, they had only played 22 league fixtures.

VICE-CHAIRMAN Chris Reeves insists Poole Town are on course to complete essential improvements to their Tatnam home despite a looming March 31 deadline.

Inspectors issued the Dolphins with a lengthy to-do list in December for the ground to meet The Football Association's C grade – the minimum standard to compete in the Calor Southern Premier Division, writes ANDY MITCHELL.

Necessary work includes provision for extra covered seating, an additional turnstile, more toilets for supporters and permanent hard standing around all open areas of the ground.

Progress was stifled by a wait for planning permission and landlord's consent with the subsequent restrictions raising doubts over the club's ability to secure funding from the Football Foundation.

A new, single application for up to half of the reduced £200,000 cost has now been submitted with Poole granted permission to begin work prior to any award.

Reeves, pictured below, explained: "Because of the three-year condition on the planning permission, the Football Association had to go back to an FA panel.



"After being held back by various things, including the weather, we had to alter our initial application and refocus on the critical work for the C grade.

"We have been in regular touch with the Football Foundation over the past couple of weeks and, with the time scales involved, we have been given a without prejudice letter to make a start."

Turnstiles at the Well Lane end of the ground have been moved to join a hard standing path, while the small stand behind the goal has been moved ready to accommodate extra seating.

The existing side stand will be made all-seater, while the far end and school side of the stadium will be closed to supporters for the next two home matches while groundwork takes place.

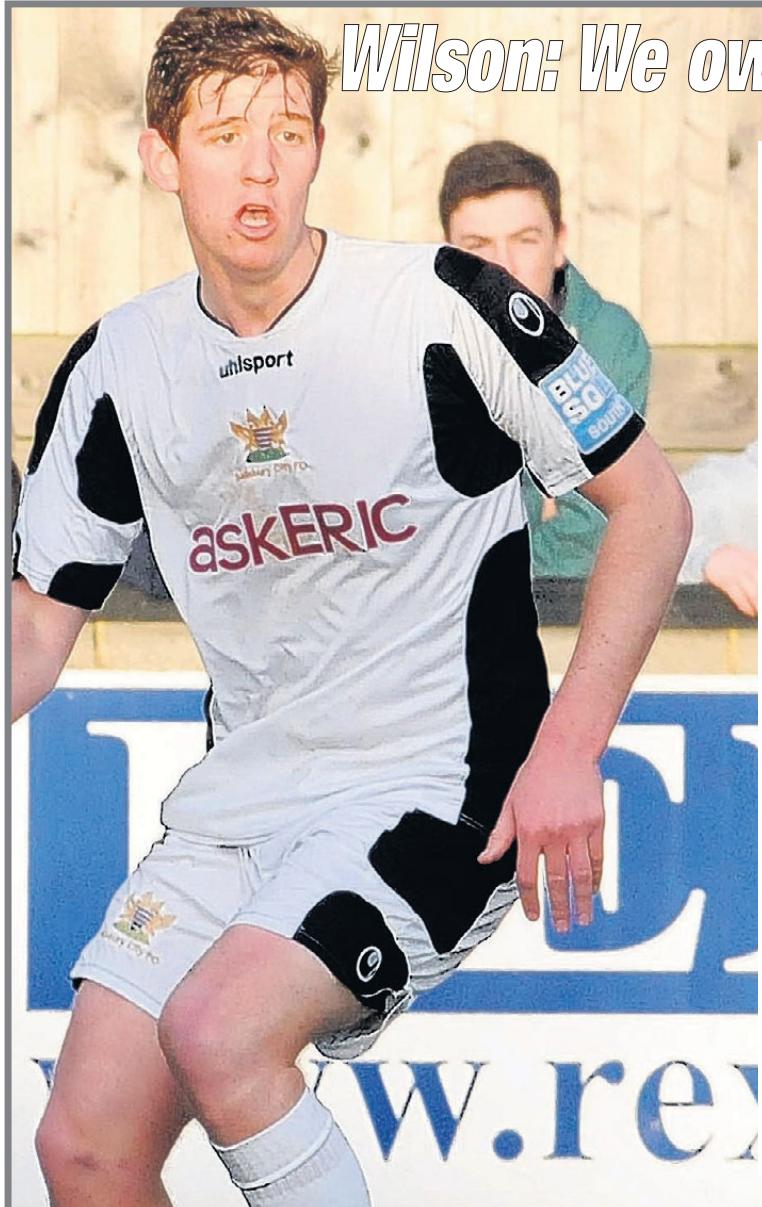
Extra seats and a turnstile have been sourced while a new stand, which will house up to 250 supporters, is being constructed off-site.

While the funding has yet to be rubber-stamped, Reeves was "optimistic" funds would be cleared and was "not aware of any problems" that could stand in the club's way.

He added that Poole would still be able to complete the necessary work if the cash injection was not forthcoming and that hopes remained high that improved social facilities would also be up and running before the deadline.

MORE NON-LEAGUE IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Non-league Football



Wilson: We owed fans a response

SKIPPER Glenn Wilson was chuffed with Salisbury City's response to their defensive nightmare at Halifax Town two weeks ago.

After enduring a 5-1 thumping at The Shay, the Whites pulled themselves back together to hold promotion-chasing Alfreton Town to a 0-0 draw in stormy conditions at the Raymond McEnhill Stadium last Saturday.

Wilson, 27, said: "We had to improve on the defensive display at Halifax and the gaffer (Mikey Harris) made sure we worked on our mistakes in the week.

"We all put a shift in on Saturday as we owed it to the fans after not putting in a good performance in West Yorkshire. But these things happen. It's a long season and we're going to have days like that."

"Fortunately we put it right against Alfreton. Mikey made sure we improved straight away."

Wilson has appeared in all of City's 31 Skrill Conference Premier games, predominantly pairing up with James Clarke at centre-half.

But Clarke's injury gave Brian Dutton his chance last week and the ex-Eastleigh utility man did not disappoint against an Alfreton side that have netted almost 50 league goals.

"Listen, James has been brilliant this season and I've enjoyed playing

alongside him," said Wilson.

"Brian has come in and done very well, like he has all season when we've needed him."

Salisbury kept up the good work on Tuesday, climbing into the play-off zone with a 2-0 home win over Woking. Second-half goals from Cameroonian midfielder Clovis Kamdjio and Angus MacDonald sealed the deal for Harris's men.

The delighted boss said: "Everyone put in an incredible amount of effort and we got our rewards."

"I'm delighted to pick up the win and complete the double over Woking."

"The top five is a nice place to be and it's just a case of doing our level best to stay there with the resources we have available."

"We were just about able to fill the bench and we've got a thin squad, which is even more credit to the players."

With many games in the division losing out to the weather, the ground staff at Salisbury, once again, worked tirelessly to get two games in the space of three days.

"The lads behind the scenes working on the pitch deserve a huge amount of respect and gratitude from us for getting games on," Harris added.

"Playing these matches gives us the momentum to push forward."

Non-league News

Hill and Pike in 'war' of words

EASTLEIGH boss Richard Hill has wished Hampshire rivals Havant & Waterlooville and Gosport Borough all the best in their quest to reach Wembley.

Weather permitting, the two Portsmouth area sides were due to meet in the FA Trophy semi-final first leg at Hawks' Westleigh Park HQ today with the second leg to follow at Privett Park next Saturday.

Gosport boss Alex Pike had a playful pop at Hill, below, recently for seemingly taking some of the credit for second-to-bottom Borough's shock 1-0 Conference South win at Weston-super-Mare.

On hearing the result, Hill said the Spitfires had done Gosport a favour because

Weston "were probably dead on their feet" having put so much effort into beating Eastleigh 3-2 the previous Tuesday.

Pike, in response, quipped that Gosport's subsequent Trophy quarter-final win at North Ferriby United was particularly satisfying because Eastleigh "couldn't take any credit for it whatsoever."

Hill, who has insisted all season that teams raise their game to play title favourites Eastleigh, said his comment had been misconstrued by Pike and was aimed entirely at Weston.

But he added: "I read Alex's words with interest. Let's hope Gosport's game against Whitehawk the other night (a 2-0 home league defeat) doesn't mean they've left their confidence at North Ferriby!"

Havant wanted to switch today's Trophy first leg to tomorrow (Sunday) to avoid clashing with Portsmouth's League Two game against AFC Wimbledon, but Gosport wouldn't play ball.

Relegation-threatened Borough have a vital league match at Maidenhead United on Tuesday and Pike said: "It is no consideration of mine what the crowd is going to be at Havant."

"All I'm interested in is my players. To play on Sunday afternoon and then Tuesday night at Maidenhead I didn't think was fair."

"And Havant don't have a game in midweek."

GOSPORT FIXTURE NIGHTMARE



SKRILL Conference South relegation battlers Gosport Borough are facing up to a gruelling schedule of eight games in 18 days.

A combination of cup success and wet weather postponements has given Alex Pike's men a major fixture backlog to clear.

It has left Borough with no other option but to rearrange home league games against Ebbsfleet United and Weston-super-Mare for two consecutive Thursdays – March 27 and April 3.

The upshot is that they will play eight times in a manic 18-day period between Saturday, March 22 and Tuesday, April 8, including a run of six consecutive home games in 13 days!

The ongoing wet weather, com-

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bined with Gosport's knockout form in the FA Trophy, Hampshire FA Senior Cup and Russell Cotes Cup, has given club secretary Brian Cosgrave a devil of a headache trying the squeeze the fixtures in.

As things stand, the Borough boys will be playing every Saturday and at least once in midweek from now until the end of the season – and they still have a couple of outstanding matches to rearrange!

After a washout weekend, Gosport returned to action at home to Whitehawk on Tuesday night.

But, alas for Pike's men, it ended in the misery of a 2-0 defeat.

Ex-Eastleigh man Ashley Carew –

new in at Whitehawk on a month's loan from Dover – struck the first blow and the visitors doubled their advantage through the impressive Jake Robinson with 15 minutes to go.

The result kept Gosport deep in trouble second-to-bottom of the table. They remain just a point clear of rock-bottom Dorchester Town, who were sunk by two Scott Jones goals as Havant & Waterlooville triumphed 2-0 at the Avenue Stadium.

● TICKETS for the second leg of Gosport's FA Trophy semi-final against Havant & Waterlooville next Saturday (February 22) went on sale this week, priced £12 adults, £8 concessions and £4 under-16s.

Those holding advanced tickets will be fast-tracked into the ground using dedicated turnstiles. Those purchasing on the day will take longer to get in.

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Water torture for Priory boss

CHRISTCHURCH boss Michael Cuffie admits he has "never known anything like" the relentless bad weather that keeps wiping out vast swathes of Sydenhams Wessex League fixtures.

Priory were hopeful of finally returning to action after TWO MONTHS of waiting at home to Fawley AFC on Wednesday.

But, following an afternoon pitch inspection by the match referee, that game joined the ever-lengthening list of Wessex postponements.

It left the Hurn Bridge outfit without a taste of competitive action since suffering a 3-0 defeat at Winchester City way back on Saturday, December 14.

Since then the club has seen a succession of home and away fixtures fall victim to sodden pitches and even the decision to switch their Russell Cotes Cup quarter-final to opponents

Gosport Borough's ground proved fruitless.

"I've never known anything like it," said Cuffie, pictured left. "It is new to me and new to the club.

"It is such a shame because we changed the system and one or two of the new signings had started to fit in quite well."

"There was a nice atmosphere building in the dressing room and so this has stifled us a little bit."

"I just hope we can keep that going because we were making real progress."

"Everyone is just itching to get back out there."

"The one bonus is that all our players are physically fit with no injury concerns, but match fitness and sharpness might take some time."

"The first game back will be like pre-season all over again because eight weeks is as long as, if not longer than, the summer break."

Despite the weather, Cuffie has managed to put on training sessions on a reasonably regular basis.

"I have guys from as far away as Southampton who have been pulling out all the stops to make training," he said.

"Our hands have been tied. We have trained on most of the Saturdays, but it has been difficult to find somewhere not waterlogged at the last minute."

"There are only so many places to go and so much you can do with the players. There is a massive difference between playing and training, so it will be a tough test for the lads when we finally get a game on."



Photo: Garry Bowden



WRIGHT MOVE

Non-league nomad quick to settle in at Eastleigh

AT THE relatively tender age of 25, Ben Wright is well known to plenty of non-league football fans across the land.

When, earlier this month, the Salisbury City centre-forward agreed to link up for a month with Richard Hill's Eastleigh, he was joining the 18th club of a hitherto nomadic career, writes PAUL McNAMARA.

When the subject of his roaming football existence is broached, Wright responds with a good natured exasperated sigh, which is accompanied by a resigned smile.

His grand collection of stopping posts is, he concedes, "too many".

What will delight his new manager and supporters is that their new player's itchy feet are triggered by the simple desire to play football.

Eastleigh midfielder Glen Southam recently voiced his opinion that players who are happy to sit on the sidelines "need their head testing".

The latest acquisition to the Spitfires' ranks sings from the same hymn sheet as the club's captain.

"I'm one of those players who, if I'm not playing, I don't want to be at a club," Wright said.

"I'm not happy to sit there and be on the bench. I want to be out playing games."

"I know that might sound arrogant, but I think that's the only way you develop your career, and it's the only way to be happy."

"It's wrong for footballers to be happy not playing games. I've not been playing at Salisbury and there's nothing more I'd love than to be a part of getting promoted with Eastleigh, and being involved in my fair share of games."

From his first minute on



PEDIGREE: Ben Wright, centre, celebrates with Salisbury teammates after scoring against Dartford in the FA Cup.

the training pitches alongside the Silverlake Stadium, Wright has appeared at home in his new environment.

He is relishing being immersed into the intense but high spirited atmosphere under Hill's charge.

The instant bedding in process owes much to the

presence of some familiar faces, all former colleagues on the powerful forward's travels.

"I know a lot of the lads here; Jamie Collins, Craig McAllister and Jai Reason to name a few, so I've settled in fine already," he explained.

"With the squad they've

got here they want to be pushing to be promoted, and they do belong at a higher level.

"I speak to Jamie, Jai and Macca pretty regularly anyway without having previously had any links to Eastleigh myself."

"It's always great to know people when you



come to a new club, so I'm feeling comfortable and just want to get on the pitch playing and doing well."

When he does don the Eastleigh blue, what does Wright suggest that fans

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FOR BEN



WELL TRAVELED: Ben Wright on the ball for Salisbury, his 17th club.

and teammates expect from their latest capture?

"If I get chances I score goals," he stated.

"That's the main ability that a striker needs."

"I can create chances as well so hopefully I can add to the goals and quality

here. They've got some great players in the final third so I just want to boost that.

"I've always scored wherever I've played. It's just a matter of keeping a place in the team."

"When you go to bigger clubs, like Forest Green Rovers and Crawley Town,

the competition for places is fierce.

"It only takes one bad performance and you're out of the team."

"Once you get a regular place in the team you develop your confidence and fitness. Playing consistently is the only way to do that."

"I always think I can do well, but it's a case of getting an opportunity to do so. That said, you have to take your opportunity when it comes as well."

Wright, who started his football journey with hometown side Basingstoke Town – where

he has also just completed a month-long stay, scoring once in three appearances – can point to statistics to back up his words.

A particularly prolific year, spent in the same team as Reason at Conference Premier outfit Braintree Town, attracted the attention of Football League chasing Forest Green.

Wright's subsequent spell with the aspirational Gloucestershire club was hampered, however, when just two months into the 2012/2013 season he sustained damage to both the medial and posterior cruciate ligaments in his knee.

That setback resulted in Wright's eventual departure for Salisbury last summer, and has served to further fuel the striker's motivation today.

"In 2011/2012 I played in 40 matches for Braintree (in the Conference) and scored 17 goals," he remarked.

"I was hoping the year after to have a big season, so to be injured was frustrating.

"That kept me out for about four-and-a-half months. I went back on loan to Braintree for the last month of the season just to work my way back to fitness. The season ended at the wrong time for me really.

"This season, then, was one I was really looking to do well in."

"It's been frustrating not to get a big run of games, especially after I've scored a few goals."

"I felt like I was getting much fitter. My knee was fine."

"I wasn't feeling any problems with it at all."

"I did well in pre-season and scored goals (including one in a 2-1 win at Eastleigh).

Continued on page 36

Eastleigh 2013/14

Conference South

August

17 Sutton (H)	W1-0
Odubade	
20 Bath City (A)	W1-0
Strevens	
24 Basingstoke (A)	LO-2
26 Havant and W (H)	D 0-0
31 Boreham Wood (A)	W 3-0
McAllister, Fleetwood, Reason	

September

7 Bromley (H)	W 2-1
McAllister, Fleetwood	
14 Maidenhead (A)	W 3-1
Odubade 2, McAllister	
17 Eastbourne (H)	W 2-0
Reason, Southampton	
21 Hayes and Y (H)	W 1-0
McAllister	

October

5 Concord (H)	D 1-1
Reason	
8 Ebbsfleet (A)	L 1-3
Fleetwood	
19 Staines (H)	W 1-0
Reason	

November

2 Sutton (A)	D 1-1
McAllister	
9 Farnborough (H)	W 1-0
McAllister	
12 Gosport (A)	W 2-0
Odubade, Southampton	
23 Tonbridge (H)	L 1-2
Collins	

December

17 Dover (A)	W 2-1
Strevens, Fleetwood	
21 Chelmsford City (H)	PP
26 Dorchester Town (A)	W 2-1
Strevens, Reason	
28 Bath City (H)	W 2-1
Strevens, Collins	

January

1 Dorchester Town (H)	PP
4 Eastbourne Borough	PP
11 Bishop's Stortford	PP
18 Gosport Borough, H	W 2-1
McAllister Strevens	
21 Weston-super-Mare, A	L 2-3
McAllister, Odubade	
25 Ebbsfleet, H	W 3-1
Reason 3	
28 Bromley, A	PP

February

4 Dover (H)	PP
8 Maidenhead United (H)	PP
15 Tonbridge Angels	(A)
18 B Stortford	(A)
22 Farnborough	(A)
25 Chelmsford	(H)

March

1 Weston-super-Mare	(H)
4 Eastbourne Borough	(A)
8 Concord Rangers	(A)
15 Bishop's Stortford	(H)
18 Whitehawk	(A)
22 Staines Town	(A)
25 Dorchester	(H)
29 Hayes and Yeading U	(A)

1 Bishop's Stortford	(A)
5 Whitehawk	(H)
8 Bromley	(A)
12 Chelmsford City	(A)
15 Dover	(H)
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26 Boreham Wood	(H)

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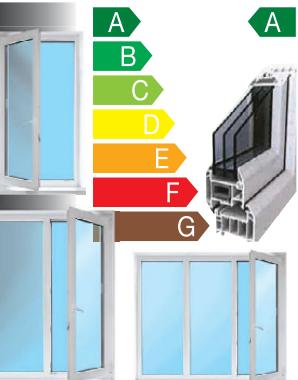


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The Wright move for Ben

From page 33

"We did have a poor start to the season at Salisbury. We lost our first three and I found myself out of the side then, but I started scoring when I was coming off the bench."

"Everyone wants to play games and, particularly with how frustrating the season before was, I wanted to play a big part this year."

"Unfortunately, the way it's panned out I've not been playing."

"I just want to get out and play games and, if I can do well here, then I'd like to hopefully stay and be promoted."

A fearsome striker of a ball, who has tasted life in the Football League with Peterborough United and Barnet, Wright is decisive when expressing his hopes for what lies ahead – personally and for Eastleigh FC.

It is time, he says, for player and club to begin their ascent



BEN WRIGHT

up the football ladder.

"I'd love to come in and help. I know it's going to be a big three months for the football club," said the man who has scored five Conference Premier goals in eight starts for Salisbury this season plus 12 more off the bench.

"I'd love to be a part of that until the end of the season to be honest."

"I just want to come, get involved, hopefully get in the side, score goals, do well and keep my place."

"I certainly don't think I'm too old at 25 (to earn a move back into the league)."

"If I can play in the Conference Premier and score 20 odd goals, which I believe I'm capable of doing given the chance, then there's no reason why that can't secure you a move to a higher team. I'd love to do that."

Determined and aiming high, Ben Wright's latest home is with a club that shares his values.

The signs are good for a prosperous relationship.

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WET WEATHER MAY

HAMPSHIRE'S football leagues are facing irreparable damage because of the atrocious weather this winter.

That is the concern of Drew Smith Southampton Saturday League secretary Rod Sutherland, who fears teams will lose interest for next season and drop out due to the endless postponements in recent weeks, writes **PETER HOWARD**.

He said: "I fully expect teams to leave because they won't want the hassle of all these postponements."

"It is a lot of hard work trying to get a match on – it's just a fruitless task at the moment."

"The last time full fixtures were played was December 7. There will be a point when a league committee will gather and may have to decide the fate of the season."

While that is yet to come to fruition, there are far more pressing issues threatening Saturday football.

Sutherland said: "It's getting to that point where it's the worst season on record."

"Give it another month and the Drew Smith will be in real danger of getting cancelled altogether."

"If the weather turns for the better in March, then I would say we'll get through the fixtures."

"There are five Saturdays in March; if we can play all of them then we'll be on track to complete the season."

"But, if nothing improves, it could be the end of this campaign."

Hythe Aztecs Veterans have been one of the worst-affected teams, waiting an incredible seven weeks for their Hampshire Veterans Cup semi-final against Locksheath to take place.

"It is without doubt the worst season I've ever experienced," said manager Leighton O'Hara.

"We've got lots of players who are well into their 30s. How they're going to play three times a week to make up for fixtures, I'm not sure."

"I have 32 players in my squad and I'm going to have to use every single one of them."

Shield FC, from Junior 5 of the Southampton League, have played just four league matches. With an outrageous 14 games left, they could well find themselves playing alongside cricket teams in May.

"It's just relentless. We can't get a game on because of the cup matches are taking priority on the 3G pitches," said manager Tony Roles.

"We did get a game on two weeks ago on the 3G at Wide Lane. That was great but we weren't allowed to wear boots, meaning everyone had to scrounge around for Astroturf boots."

Tony is also assistant boss at Tyro League side Baddesley Park Under-12s, who his son, Joe, plays for.

He fears the worst for the young-



Pic no:
17907881

ARTIFICIAL HELP: Teams have been playing cup ties on the 3G pitch at Wide Lane recently while this pitch (main picture) at Flemming Park, Eastleigh, took a battering. Pictures: Matt Watson.

sters that are stuck inside on a Saturday and Sunday rather than playing football.

"This weather could potentially have a major effect on our future players. If there is no grass roots football getting played, there is a risk talented youngster may miss out on valuable playing time," he said.

"It could be disastrous for those children. My son and his team eat, sleep and breathe football and you

know they're all bored without it.

"It affects them because they get frustrated and become interested in other things."

"We could see a lot of kids going off the sport all together."

Elliot Netherwood plays for Hythe Strikers Under-15s and is a Year 10 pupil from Hardley School.

He has spent the last fortnight on work experience at the *Southern Daily Echo* and has been

left frustrated by the lack of matches too.

He said: "I haven't played since mid December. As frustrating as it is, there isn't much anyone can do about it."

"If you ask every player competing in the Tyro League, they would tell you that they haven't played a game in weeks. It's very frustrating."

Meanwhile, the Sydenhams Wessex League are anticipating a

WAS ANY FOOTBALL PLAYED TODAY? - SEE PAGE 48 FOR RESULTS

WASH OUT LEAGUE

Another month like this and local football could be scrapped



WEATHER WARNING:
Drew Smith
Southampton League
secretary Rod
Sutherland, above.

thumbs up from The Football Association for Step 5 clubs to extend their season.

But SWL secretary John Gorman says the Wessex's aim is to get all games played by the last Saturday in April and only use an extra week if strictly necessary.

The Sussex County League are among those who want an extension to the league season granted.

The Sydenhams League would also favour an extra week but, at

this stage, only for emergency back-up.

Gorman said: "There's a layer of bureaucracy between ourselves and The FA and my understanding is that a focus group will be meeting with The FA at Wembley this week to request a week's extension to the season.

"From our point of view, we've said we'll do our best to get all our fixtures played by April 26.

"We wouldn't mind the extra

week to keep in reserve, but whereas some leagues are already pencilling matches into that extra week, we would only use it if we had to.

"Our situation is manageable at the moment, but it doesn't mean we can be complacent and if the FA offered us a week's extension we'd be grateful.

"The league is doing its best to get the season finished on time, but we don't want to impose awful

problems on clubs.

"My personal view is that the FA will grant an extra week because there are other leagues in a far worse position than we are. What must it be like in the West Country, for example?"

Fareham Town are the hardest hit of the Sydenhams Wessex Premier clubs. With less than three months of the season remaining, they still have 24 league games outstanding – plus a semi-final of the Russell Cotes Cup.

A statement on the club website said Town hoped "common sense" would prevail with the provision of an extra week.

It continued: "We appreciate that some weeks, even if the season is extended, we will still be required to play four games within a seven-day period, but believe it would be unsafe on the players to expect them to play four matches a week for three months consistently. "It would also make a mockery of the competition by doing so."

Fareham have played 12 league games fewer than divisional rivals Romsey Town.

There was a similar situation only last season with Newport IOW having played just 18 games by this stage of the term and Romsey having played 28. *Turn to page 38*

It's a Devil of a good win!

Saints Devils U11s 8

Petersfield U12s 0

GOOD combination play saw Devils dominate possession in the Plate Tournament

Playing on 3G at Perrins' School, Alresford, Devils enjoyed most possession from the start, harassing Petersfield constantly and taking every opportunity to finish.

Saints built intelligent moves and took just five minutes to score, Holly Jerrim's shot blocked for Larissa White to net the rebound. Then Jerrim's low cross set up Charlotte Webb for the second.

Devils went close several times but just before half time Katelyn Wort created the chance for Grace Griffiths to make it 3-0.

The Petersfield keeper was Devils' opposition player of the match but her throw stalled into the wind and Webb made it five.

Holly McKeown forced home a slightly controversial sixth before Webb's cracker completed her hat-trick and McKeown tapped home at the end.

Manager's player of the match was Grace Griffiths for her blistering runs and ball mastery.



Hat-trick girl Charlotte Webb on the break for Saints.

Southampton Saints U12s 7
Winchester Flyers 1

SAINTS' U12 cup quarter final on Saturday was also at Perrins'.

Lisa Gilham and Arabella Suttie provided the width, and Jennifer King soon scored.

Hannah Burroughs, Emily Gook and Manisha Kaur coped under pressure from pacy Winchester wingers and Grace Jenman did well in goal.

Suttie dribbled through to fire an unstoppable second while Gilham's crosses set up both Chloe Hussey and King to make it 4-0.

Left footer Beth Turner reacted quickest to score after the break as Saints continued to play great attacking football.

King completed her hat-trick and, although Winchester pulled a goal back, Anteney responded as Saints reached the semi-final.

Manager's player of the game award went to Suttie and King.

Saints U14 2 Portsmouth Uni 0
THE U14s, playing their normal attacking game despite the wind, also made their semi-final.

Leah Lacey and Ellie Russell were a threat from wide areas and Emily Herding and Lauren Stone pushed forward well from defence while Sarah Williamson pulled the strings in the middle.

After a scoreless first half, Saints' constant pressure paid off when Sarah Williamson, Ellie Russell and Leah Brown swapped passes and Alisha Buckingham scored at the far post.

Then another good move on the right wing picked out Leah Brown unmarked and her low shot found the net.

Manager's player of the match was Leah Lace.

League weather beaten

from page 37

The season before, 2011/12, most teams had played around 30 games by mid February.

Hamworthy had played the most, 33, and Blackfield & Langley the fewest, 25.

In 2010/11, a season where there was a lot of snow in the December, most Wessex Premier teams were into the 30s or approaching them.

Blackfield & Langley had played 34, ten more than Poole Town and Newport IOW.

In 2009/10, Hayling United had played the fewest games, 26, whereas Winchester City had played 33.

Twenty four teams out of the 65 in the Drew Smith Southampton League haven't played a fixture in 2014.

Southampton University side Montefiore, in Junior 2, haven't had a run out since November.

Junior 5 side AFC Nemesis suffered the irony of arranging a match at Cantell School on their 3G pitch and soon after having to postpone it because the surface had flooded.

"You've got to see the funny side really," said manager Lucy



FUNNY SIDE: Lucy Mair.

Mair. "Every time a game is postponed, there is a free-for-all for the 3G pitches."

"Most of the time you don't get any luck and end up not playing."

"This time we were lucky enough to get the pitch but, in the end, we couldn't even play on that."

Council pitches like Green Park, Millbrook Rec, Riverside Park and Fleming Park haven't seen games played on them for a long time.

And, with cup ties taking priority over the league for 3G pitches, a lot of the leagues are rotting away.

Mair is seeing the bright side, however. "Technically, we're on a two-month unbeaten run," she quipped.

"On a serious note, we'd all rather be playing football on a Saturday. We've not had a game for two months now."

"The last I heard Green Park was like a lake, so it doesn't look like we'll be playing anytime soon."

"You're constantly in limbo wondering whether you're going to play or not. The kit bags have been sat there for weeks ready to go."

Sunday League secretary Greg Dickson relates the bad weather to teams withdrawing after his divisions have been all but abandoned since December.

Continued on facing page



THE worst spell of sustained wet weather in living memory has caused chaos for grassroots sport in recent weeks.

Adult and youth football fixture lists have been decimated, and there appears no sight of a tunnel – let alone a light at the end of it.

Players, officials and administrators have been left making last minute phone calls and sending emails after a blizzard of postponements.

I, for one, can appreciate all the frustration this causes.

In addition to writing about the beautiful game for a living, this season I have taken on the task of managing my son's Fordingbridge Town under-12 team in the Testway Youth.

Even on a day off, there's no escaping football.

Brilliant!

Well, it was until the rain started to fall just below Christmas and, for the most part, continued non-stop ever since.

Since playing a league game at Whitchurch on December 7, we

Simon Carter

simon.carter@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS EDITOR

have only managed one competitive game in the two months since.

That was back on January 11 at Clarendon.

Since then, we have had five weeks of postponements.

Some games have been called off because our home pitch at the Burgate School in Fordingbridge has been waterlogged.

It's not up to us whether the games get played.

The club hire them off the school and it's the Burgate who have the final say.

Other weeks we have been left inactive because our opponents have had cup ties re-arranged following postponements.

Not that we could have played at home anyway.

Not a single game has been played at the Burgate since before Christmas due to the weather.

Given that the pitch was under

almost a foot of water last weekend, I wouldn't be surprised if that situation changed quickly.

I couldn't believe my eyes when I arrived to help with sandbagging at Fordingbridge Junior School last Saturday lunchtime.

Not only were the school buildings in danger of flooding, the playgrounds were under more than a foot of water in places.

A few hundred yards away, our under-12 pitch was totally under water too.

"I guess I can see why Burgate have called the games off today," I thought to myself.

Now let's get one thing straight before we go any further.

Of course, grassroots football is well down the pecking order of things to get concerned about in times of flooding.

I am fully aware of the situation down in large parts of the west country.

I'm from the west country, I've seen the remarkable pictures on television and in the papers.

Compared to people's livelihoods being washed away by Biblical

amounts of water, a few weeks without playing in the Testway Youth League is no hardship.

I get that.

On a far smaller scale, though, the continuing wet weather is a headache for everyone concerned.

Sympathy must be extended to those who have to organise youth football fixtures, hardly an easy administration issue at the best of times.

I have been receiving almost daily emails from Testway Youth League secretary Roger Smith these past few weeks regarding postponements and fixture re-arrangements.

Clubs have been asked to try and switch venues if possible to try and get games played.

Emails have gone out asking if clubs would be willing to play through the Easter period.

Normally no fixtures are planned to coincide with the annual school holiday period.

Now the league have no choice but to schedule fixtures for that time, and they are probably not alone throughout the county.

EMAIL THE SPORTS DESK: ECHOSPORT@DAILYCHO.CO.UK



WET, WET, WET:
Fordingbridge Recreation
Ground last weekend.

The astroturf facility at Charlton, near Andover, has been made available to clubs – at a cost – if both clubs are happy to play on an artificial surface.

In addition, a handful of midweek games have already been organised – causing a flurry of emails, no doubt – and some dreaded double headers – around 20 – have also been scheduled.

My Fordingbridge side have been given two double headers, as we have only played eight of our scheduled 18 league games so far.

We have only played two out of our nine home games!

There are teams worse off, though.

Sarum under-14s have been given three double headers and so have Hatch Warren in the under-15 league.

Double headers are a huge pain, especially in youth football.

Instead of playing an hour-long game at West Harnham next weekend, we face the prospect of two half-hour games instead.

That is also our fate against Barton Stacey next month, though

in fairness I would prefer a double header against them rather than have to trek to somewhere near Basingstoke on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening.

The league season is supposed to end on April 26, but I wouldn't be surprised if it was extended.

At the current rate, it has to be.

One of Smith's emails asked if clubs could play games in May if necessary.

You don't often get youth football games going into the cricket season, but we are living in unusual times with regards to the amount of rainfall we are seeing.

Elsewhere, a lot of clubs playing a serious standard of football are facing fixture congestion.

At present, the Sydenhams Wessex season is due to finish on the last Saturday of April as well.

Going into this weekend, Fareham Town still had 24 Premier Division games left to cram into the last 11 weeks of the campaign.

The Hampshire FA have had to reschedule ties in their many county cup competitions on a weekly basis these past two months.

A handful of ties have been switched after a succession of postponements, with some games having been called off six times.

Higher up the pyramid, FA Trophy semi-finalists Havant have completed just 20 of their 42 Conference South games.

That leaves 23 matches to pack into the next 11 weeks, as the Conference South season is also due to finish on April 26.

There could be some very tired legs at all levels of football by then!

In the same Conference South, Eastleigh went into this weekend's game having played just 22 of their 42 league games.

This time last season they had completed 26 matches.

Richard Hill's men face a busy March – they have eight games scheduled during it – but in fairness almost every week between now and the end of the season promises some midweek action.

For their part, Saints have yet to be hit by the wet weather.

That hasn't always been the case, though.

Back in 1962/63, the football sea-

son was thrown into chaos by prolonged snow.

Saints didn't play a single league game between Boxing Day and February 23.

As a result, Ted Bates's men had to play 14 games – a third of their entire Second Division season – in April and May.

They had to play their last eight games inside the first 22 days of May!

The situation was only marginally better in 1946/47, when Saints played 10 of their 42 games in April and May.

Their final game of the Second Division campaign was on May 26 – their latest finish ever.

More recently, Lawrie McMenemy's men crammed their last 11 games of a 42-game top flight season into April and May 1979.

That was after weeks of snowy weather had played havoc with a fixture list already crammed as a result of reaching the League Cup final and the quarter-finals of the FA Cup.

from facing page

"Our team numbers have dwindled in recent years," he said.

"Players aren't coming back to football because, when a bit of bad weather comes along and postponements happen, they go off and do other things."

"So, when fixtures kick off again, they are used to not playing and don't come back."

"Two teams have dropped out this season and there could be another one on the way."

"It's a pity but I know a lot of players who would rather stay in bed, nice and cosy, than come out in the cold and wet to play football on a Sunday morning."

"I don't blame them."

C&G and Hamble Club are the two clubs that have already folded and there are others that could go.

Hazel Andrews, secretary of the City of Southampton Sunday League, attempted to counter the bad weather when planning the fixtures last summer.

"We're up to date," she said. "I deliberately made the leagues smaller so that if anything we'd finish early."

"And if we do, we have supplementary cups that we can play. The pitches are like swimming pools at the moment."

"The problems aren't over but we're doing alright at the moment as a league."

"If it continues there could be trouble but, as of yet, we're not having issues."

"We've tried to learn from previous season and make preparations for this eventuality."

"It has come a bit earlier than usual but, with our festive break and smaller leagues, there is more chance of us coping."

Michael Carr, a midfielder for Bannister Park, who play in Junior 5 in the Southampton Sunday League, said: "I was worried that we would have the season wrapped up in January, but we haven't played a game since the beginning of December."

"It's pretty gutting really, as it's become so customary to have that text by our manager saying 'game is off, lads', that it almost becomes an on-going joke."

"I can't remember the last time I've kicked a ball in anger on grass, and the fear is that I'll get out of the habit of playing."

Officials of the Puma Engineering Hampshire League are less concerned than others.

"We have until the end of May to finish the leagues," said secretary Roger Allen.

"I would hope to have our two smaller divisions completed on time. We will just have to persevere with the larger Premier Division but would hope to have that done by the end of April."

Allen feels his league, unlike others, is in a fairly comfortable position and doesn't want to play up the weather too much.

"I'm under the impression the weather isn't too much of a problem. We've had it a lot worse – I seem to remember a year where we had frozen pitches for a long, long time."

"We can make use of artificial pitches, which we have done already this season."

"QK Southampton are hoping to use the synthetic pitch at Test Park this weekend and we have Clanfield v AFC Stoneham getting played at South Downs College. We can do it – clubs just have to adapt."

"There is no reason to panic at the moment."

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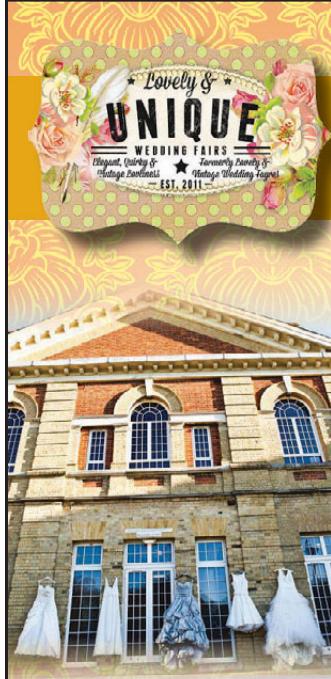


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Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

Hampshire set to bring back Glenn

HAMPSHIRE are set to re-sign Australia star Glenn Maxwell as their second Twenty20 overseas player.

Maxwell's return to the Ageas Bowl is expected to be confirmed on Monday and he is set to feature for the county in all forms of the game, as well as being a regular in the T20 Blast.

He will rejoin Hampshire after playing at the Indian Premier League, having been bought for \$1m at this week's IPL auction for the second year running, this time by Kings XI Punjab.

Director of Cricket Giles White said: "I've spoken to [Cricket Australia's team performance manager] Pat Howard and we're close to completing the signing, it's all going in the right direction, we're very nearly there with it."

"Crucial to the deal is Glenn's availability for red-ball cricket should Kyle Abbot, our main overseas player, be unavailable."

"Cricket Australia see Glenn as a future Test player and they want him to develop that side of his game with us."

"That's something we want to help Glenn with so he'll play for our Second XI during the week and come in to the Championship team when Kyle is not available for any reason."

Maxwell, pictured, has been centrally contracted by Cricket Australia since last April, having starred during his first stint with Hampshire in 2012.



He was a relative unknown back then, having arrived in England to play for South Wilts in the Southern Electric Premier League.

But he helped Hampshire win the limited-overs double by rejuvenating their t20 group campaign with two blistering fifties at Kent and Essex.

Maxwell may miss Hampshire's first few games this year, depending on Kings XI Punjab's IPL progress, but will return to the Ageas Bowl as a global T20 star.

Should Kings XI Punjab fail to qualify for the Champions League, he could play at least two Championship games at the end of the season, when Abbott will be at the T20 showpiece with the Sunfoil Dolphins.

And if Abbott is called up by South Africa for their tour of Zimbabwe in August, Maxwell would also play then.

The 25-year-old has still only played 26 first-class matches but highlighted his red-ball ability as recently as yesterday in the Sheffield Shield, Australia's domestic competition.

Maxwell hit a 102-ball 127 (14 fours, seven sixes) – after arriving at the crease with his side reeling on 9 for 6!

It was well worth the wait to get Benkenstein

THE reaction of Durham's players shows that Hampshire's capture of Dale Benkenstein was well worth the wait.

Hampshire ended their three-month search for a new first-team coach by announcing Benkenstein's arrival on Thursday afternoon, prompting a deluge of tweets from disappointed Durham fans as well as the likes of Graham Onions and Scott Borthwick (see facing page).

It is a real coup for Giles White, who can now concentrate on his role as director of cricket with Hampshire well placed to contend for LV County Championship promotion and both limited-overs trophies this summer.

Having signed Kent all-rounder Matt Coles on a permanent basis and Will Smith since the end of last season, not to mention Kyle Abbott, the addition of Benkenstein completes a quartet of shrewd signings.

But after beginning the interview process back in November, it was only by chance that Hampshire became aware of Benkenstein's potential interest in the first-team coach vacancy last month. The key

Simon Walter

simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk

CRICKET REPORTER

was Jon Lewis's promotion from Durham's Second XI coach to head coach in December, his reward for guiding the north-east county to their third Championship title following the heart attack suffered by Geoff Cook last June.

It was at this time that Benkenstein, having dislocated his shoulder while diving for a ball in May, returned to South Africa with his family following an illness to his mother-in-law.

Meanwhile, determined to win the title for Cook, Durham won seven of their last nine Championship games to clinch the title.

After that, it was hard not to give the job to Lewis, who Benkenstein replaced as Durham's all-time leading run scorer in 2011, during the most prolific season of his county career.

Benkenstein had always been seen as Cook's long-term successor but with Durham keen to reduce their wage bill, his time in the

north-east was drawing to a close.

He already had his ECB Level Three coaching badge (he plans to study for his Level Four) and spent the winter working as a coach for the Sunfoil Dolphins, who qualified for the Champions League in winning the Ram Slam T20 Challenge last Sunday.

Officially, Benkenstein was the Dolphins' batting consultant but in reality he was assisting Lance Klusener, his former Natal and South Africa ODI teammate, by coaching in all areas of the game, which will only stand him in good stead at The Ageas Bowl.

It was during his time with the Dolphins that the wheels were set in motion for his move to Hampshire.

A good friend of former Hampshire stars Neil McKenzie and Nic Pothas, Benkenstein recommended Kyle Abbott to Giles White only last month, resulting in the Dolphins' star bowler signing as the county's overseas player three weeks ago.

It soon became apparent to White

that he may also have found the coach he had been looking for.

Sure enough, Benkenstein had already asked Durham about the possibility of looking for a county that would welcome him if his coaching input and his request to be released from the final year of his contract was granted.

Benkenstein's appointment promises to be mutually beneficial, but there should be no trouble settling in.

He is joining a happy, settled dressing room, in contrast to that at Durham, a county in a state of flux following the instalment of Paul Collingwood as England's new fielding coach.

Although he is moving from one end of the country to the other, there are also many similarities between Hampshire and Durham

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



NEW SIGNINGS: Hampshire snapped up Kyle Abbott, above, on the advice of Dale Benkenstein, main, pic, who was appointed Hampshire's new coach this week.

that Benkenstein acknowledged this week.

"Both clubs have matured at new grounds and gone to be really successful," he said. "And I've always got on with the guys at Hampshire, which is what makes the move fairly easy."

"England is my cricket home and South Africa is my home but my allegiance will be Hampshire and I'll be back in January," said the dad-of-three, whose children – a girl and two boys – are all school age.

Benkenstein, who played 23 one-day internationals for South Africa, will have a close working relationship with White and Hampshire captain Jimmy Adams.

And he may even add to the 15,962 first-class runs he has scored at 44 for Durham and Natal with Hampshire, in the event of an injury crisis.

"I keep getting messages congratulating me on my playing career but I haven't officially retired!" he pointed out.

Interestingly, one of his early mentors was a certain Malcolm Marshall, a star of the Natal side he made his debut for as a teenager 20 years ago alongside the likes of Shaun Pollock and ex-Hampshire overseas man Neil Johnson. So it is fitting that Benkenstein will begin his Hampshire career in Barbados when the county's pre-season tour gets under way on March 9.

Benkenstein will be contracted to Hampshire for nine months of the year, giving him the option to help the Dolphins from October-December.

Durham dismay

DALE Benkenstein's move to Hampshire has been met with widespread dismay amongst Durham's players.

Benkenstein is regarded as the best signing Durham ever made and will be a huge loss to the north-east county.

All-rounder Scott Borthwick, pictured, tweeted: "Very sad to see the legend Dale Benkenstein leave the club! Helped me massive [sic] with my game! Wish him all the best in the future!"

Former England star Graham Onions, who played for the Sunfoil Dolphins side Benkenstein has been coaching, added: "Losing a player like Dale Benkenstein is obviously a big blow and without doubt our loss and Hampshire's gain."

Opening batsman Mark Stoneman: "140 characters doesn't do justice to what Dale Benkenstein did for @DurhamCricket #irreplaceable" Hampshire all-rounder Liam Dawson tweeted: "Hearing so many good things about our new coach Dale Benkenstein. Was a proper player with a great record. Looking forward to his new ideas."

Former Hampshire star Shaun Udal added: "Congrats to @hantscricket on a great appointment in dale benkenstein, a top guy who will bring lots to the club #goodtimes"



SCHOOLS/COLLEGES SPORT

Now Katie gets a football call-up!

TALENTED Romsey teenager Katie George is poised to become a double international by representing England at both cricket and soccer.

A handy batsman and more than useful left-arm seam bowler, Katie is already in the England Under-15 cricket squad.

Now she's within touching distance of wearing the three lions on an England soccer shirt as well, writes Mike Vimpany.

Following selection for the England Under-15 Girls football squad, Katie will be putting the extreme local weather conditions firstly to one side to spend the half-term week at a training camp in Spain, just south of Barcelona.

If she catches the eye of the selectors in her striker role, Katie will be in line to play in two upcoming international matches against the Republic of Ireland at Maidstone next month and Scotland in Glasgow in April.

No matter what the size or shape of the ball, Katie simply loves her sport.

"I started playing football when I was five and have progressed through to the Hampshire centre of excellence, the elite England Under-15 south squad and now England itself.

"It's all really exciting," she beamed.

At least with the weather as it is and most sports grounds across the region flooded, Katie won't have to worry too much about honing her cricket skills.

But, if and when the country dries out and summer arrives, Katie will develop her equally exciting cricket talents with Old Tauntonians & Romsey, for whom she already plays Hampshire League cricket.

"My cricket began about four years after starting soccer and I played junior representative cricket for Dorset until the family moved to the outskirts of Romsey," she explained.

It didn't take the Hampshire Cricket Board long to switch on to her talent – and Katie is now a regular pick for the county women's team and part of the England Under-15 squad.

"I'm always practising at the Ageas Bowl and, with England, at training sessions at Loughborough University five or six times a year for fitness training," she added.

For the time being, Katie's cricket is confined to playing indoors for OTs & Romsey in the NatWest Under-16 League at the Ageas Bowl on Sunday evenings, where her left-arm swing bowling troubles many batsmen caught in that corridor of uncertainty outside the off-stump.

But next week it's Spain and a week of soccer skills for the teenage Romsey talent.

Artificial rescue

ARTIFICIAL surfaces came to the rescue as all but three scheduled Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges League fixtures were washed out this week.

The entire first team programme was washed away by Wednesday's stormy weather, but three 2nd XI games survived.

Itchen trimmed South Downs 3-1, but still have a lot of ground to make up on Peter Symonds, who are hot favourites for the title.

Queen Mary's went down 3-2 to Fareham, while at third team level South Downs shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw with Itchen.

There are no fixtures in half-term week.

Sparsholt draw

SPARSHOLT will face St John's Rigby College, from Wigan in the English Schools FA Under-18 Colleges Cup final.

That's if they ever get round to playing – and beating – Stanmore, from Middlesex, in their weather delayed semi-final.

Sparsholt will have home advantage – probably at Andover Town's Portway Stadium – if and when the semi-final clash goes ahead.

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5 SWINCOMBE STAR (87) (BF) R Walford 5 11 2 T Siddall
6 THE BAILIFF (IRE) D Pipe 5 11 2 T Scudamore
7 TWOJASLAD Williams 5 11 2 Will Kennedy
8 GAETY STAR J G O'Neill 5 10 9 A Thornton
9 LYMM GREY (56) Miss J Davis 5 10 9 S P Jones
10 PEARLY LEGEND N Mulholland 6 10 9 Michael Byrne (3)
11 TARANTELLI J Speaking 5 10 9 J Moore
12 ALIBI DE SIVOLA (FR) P Nicholls 4 10 7 D Jacob
13 FLAMENCO LAD (72) M Hill 4 10 7 B J Powell
14 RAINY CITY (IRE) P Nicholls 4 10 7 H Derham (5)
15 RONNIE ROCKCAKE (78) B Pauling 4 10 7 D Bass
16 SEA TIGER (72) A King 4 10 7 W Hutchinson
BETTING: 15-8 Bringhominity, 6-1 Alibi De Sivola, 7-1 The Bailiff, 8-1 Swincombe Star, 10-1 Flamenco Lad, 12-1 Rainy City, 14-1 Sea Tiger, 16-1 Malibu Rock, Twojاسلاد, 20-1 others.

2.00 MIX BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE AT KEMPTON 'JUMPERS' BUMPER' NH FLAT RACE (DIV 1) (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £3,249.

1 -22252 A TAIL OF INTRIGUE (IRE) (56) (BF) I Williams 6 11 2 Will Kennedy
2 66-30 BAY FORTUNA (32) M Usher 5 11 2 W Hutchinson
3 1 BENNACHIE (IRE) (208) (D) T Vaughan 5 11 2 R Johnson
4 -15400 BOSTIN (IRE) (17) B Bar 6 11 2 M Hamill (7)
5 1142 FIVE IN A ROW (IRE) (46) (BF) B Ellison 6 11 2 A P McCoy
6 /1132 FOGGY'S WALL (IRE) (48) P Nicholls 6 11 2 H Derham (5)
7 GOLD CARROT (17) G L Moore 6 11 2 Joshua Moore (3)
8 0 MR LENNYGREENGRASS (IRE) (86) F O'Brien 7 11 2 P Brennan
9 P/342- SAN SIRO (IRE) (315) P Mitchell 8 11 2 Mr F Mitchell (7)
10 00 TOP SHOW (D) I D Ivory 5 11 2 P Moloney
11 12 TSAR ALEXANDRE (FR) (308) W Greatrex 7 11 2 Q Sheehan (3)
12 50P 2 CANARBINO GIRL (16) Mrs C Keevil 7 10 9 Mr L Drowne (7)
13 2 LILY MARS (IRE) (62) N Mulholland 7 10 9 Michael Byrne (3)

14 530-P2 SUPREME PRESENT (16) (D) K Bailey 6 10 9 J Maguire
BETTING: 11-4 Foggy's Wall, 7-2 Five In A Row, 4-1 Supreme Present, 8-1 A Tail Of Intrigue, 10-1 Tsar Alexandre, 12-1 Lily Mars, Bennachie, 14-1 Bay Fortune, 20-1 others.
2.30 MIX BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE AT KEMPTON 'JUMPERS' BUMPER' NH FLAT RACE (DIV 2) (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £3,249.

1 515004 CAPTAIN OCANA (IRE) (65) P Henderson 9 11 2 T J O'Brien
2 22-204 CHASE THE WIND (IRE) (62) (BF) W Greatrex 5 11 2 G Sheehan (3)
3 CHUNCK E Creighton 7 11 2 R Johnson
4 U50-53 CRACKERJACK (66) Miss E Baker 7 11 2 J Banks (5)
5 056/P/P NICEBOY (IRE) (62) D Steele 10 11 2 Mr F Mitchell (7)
6 6-04/P2 OURMANMANSINI (IRE) (16) Miss S Smith 11 12 A Coleman
7 SMART STORY (286) (D) O'Brien 7 11 2 P Brennan
8 531425 SONOFAGUN (FR) (60) (BF) I Williams 8 11 2 Will Kennedy
9 0/2- THOMASTOWN (IRE) (475) Kevin Frost 7 11 2 T Scudamore
10 6-211 ZULU OSCAR (9) (D) H Fry 5 11 2 R Mahon
11 61-112 JOANNE ONE (IRE) (31) (D) J Snowden 6 10 9 J Powell
12 130102 NESTON GRACE (48) S Hodson 6 10 9 J M Davies
13 PPP- REDINGA (303) Mrs L Jewel 8 10 9 A Thornton
14 AS DE MEE (FR) (125) P Nicholls 4 10 7 H Derham (5)
BETTING: 11-4 Zulu Oscar, 7-2 Chase The Wind, 4-1 As De Mee, 6-1 Ourmanmansi, 7-1 Joanne One, 14-1 Sonofagun, 16-1 Neston Grace, Smart Story, 25-1 others.

3.00 BOOK NOW FOR SILVER CUPS DAY 15.03.14 'JUMPERS' BUMPER' NH FLAT RACE (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 2f Penalty Value £3,249.

1 -F3536 SPOIL ME (IRE) (16) Jonjo O'Neill 7 11 8 R McLernon
2 402004 AMAURY DE LUSIGNAN (IRE) (23) P Henderson 8 11 2 Mr G Branton (7)
3 021224 BENBANE HEAD (USA) (16) M Keighley 10 11 2 P O'Brien
4 -5214/P HENRYVILLE (IRE) (49) H Fry 6 11 2 R Mahon
5 4P4103 HALUCHA (IRE) (66) P Webber 9 11 2 L Treadwell
6 612-20 HENRYVILLE (49) H Fry 6 11 2 R Mahon
7 6/225- HIGH KITE (IRE) (424) W Greatrex 8 11 2 G Sheehan (3)
8 -U46P HOT WHISKEY (IRE) (9) P Powell 6 11 2 D Jacob
9 04F235 POLISKY (IRE) (51) P Nicholls 7 11 2 A P McCoy
10 PP4-60 RUSSIAN SONG (IRE) (251) Mrs F M Shaw 10 11 2 A Coleman

11 620-60 LADY FROM GENEVA (48) B Powell 7 10 9 Joshua Moore (3)
12 514/P1F MIDNIGHT LIRA (29) Mrs C Keevil 7 10 9 James Best (3)
BETTING: 11-4 Polisky, 3-1 Benbane Head, 6-1 Dawn Commander, 8-1 High Kite, 10-1 Halucha, Spoil Me, 11-1 Henryville, 16-1 Hot Whiskey, Midnight Lira, 25-1 others.
3.35 KEMPTON PARK CHASE DAY 22.02.14 'JUMPERS' BUMPER' NH FLAT RACE (DIV 1) (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 2f Penalty Value £3,249.

1 112150 AAZIF (IRE) (16) I Williams 5 11 2 Will Kennedy
2 1-40 CASTLE CHEETAH (IRE) (16) M Keighley 6 11 2 P O'Brien
3 212135 CASTLEMORRIS KING (210) B Bar 6 11 2 M Hamill (7)
4 21-40 COULDHAVEHADITALL (IRE) (63) (BF) P Webber 6 11 2 L Treadwell
5 5-00/P6 DARKESTBEFOREDAWN (IRE) (78) Mrs C Keevil 7 11 2 T J O'Brien
6 240305 DORMOUSE (8) Mrs A Murphy 9 11 2 J Hamer (5)
7 33214U INVICTA LAKE (IRE) (74) P O'Brien 6 11 2 P Brennan
8 F11040 ZIP WIRE (IRE) (60) D McCann 5 11 2 D Jacob
9 13-226 MIXOLOGIST (212) (BF) W Greatrex 7 11 2 G Sheehan (3)
10 7/5420/P PRESENTING ARMS (IRE) (348) (BF) H Fry 7 11 2 G Derham (7)
11 422 SILSOL (GER) (17) P Nicholls 5 11 2 H Derham (5)
12 331416 STAIGUE FORT (16) Miss E Lavelle 6 11 2 A Coleman
13 4 ZIP WIRE (IRE) (60) D McCann 5 11 2 J Maguire
14 15-21 KOOLALA (IRE) (60) P Webber 6 10 9 A P McCoy
15 3 GREY BLUE (IRE) (36) N Henderson 4 10 7 B J Geraghty
BETTING: 4-1 Grey Blue, 9-2 Koolala, 6-1 Silsol, 8-1 Zip Wire, 10-1 Mixologist, Staigue Fort, 12-1 Gud Day, 14-1 Dormouse, Couldhavehaditall, 16-1 others.

4.05 KEMPTON PARK CHASE DAY 22.02.14 'JUMPERS' BUMPER' NH FLAT RACE (DIV 2) (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 2f Penalty Value £3,249.

1 50-060 BAYLEY'S DREAM (23) P Webber 5 11 2 P Moloney
2 4-4155 BRINESTINE (USA) (31) P Nicholls 5 11 2 A Guerin (7)
3 16-353 CHEMISTRY MASTER (62) H Fry 6 11 2 M McIntrye (10)
4 25 CIVIL WAR (IRE) (10) G L Moore 5 11 2 J Moore
5 315312 DRUMLANG (IRE) (30) I Williams 8 11 2 Will Kennedy
6 2-553 GENEROUS RANSOM (IRE) (23) (BF) N Gifford 6 11 2 D Jacob
7 23-4F2 JUNO THE MUFFINMAN (IRE) (63) T Vaughan 5 11 2 R Johnson
8 3225 KNIGHTLY ESCAPE (77) B Ellison 6 11 2 A P McCoy
9 0P-234 LOD LANDEN (IRE) (40) F O'Brien 9 11 2 P Brennan

10 00U-U MR BURBIDGE (F25) N Mulholland 6 11 2 Michael Byrne (3)
11 114 STAND TO REASON (IRE) (29) N Henderson 6 11 2 B J Geraghty
12 53-0F2 WATT BRODERICK (IRE) (69) I Williams 5 11 2 R J McCarthy (5)
13 62-31 ELLNANDO QUEEN (16) (C) W Greatrex 6 11 2 G Sheehan (3)
14 P60P-0 BUSINESSMONEY JUDI (29) K Burke 8 10 9 N Schofield
BETTING: 9-4 Stand To Reason, 6-1 Ellnando Queen, 7-1 Mr Burbidge, 8-1 Generous Ransom, 10-1 Drumlang, Knightly Escapade, 12-1 Brinestine, 14-1 Juto The Muffinman, 16-1 others.

4.40 KEMPTON CO.UK 'JUMPERS' BUMPER' NH FLAT RACE (CLASS 3). £10,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £6,330.

1 1-2030 CAPELLANUS (IRE) (14) (D) B Ellison 8 11 8 R Johnson
2 6-0453 BALLYGROOBY BERTIE (IRE) (90) F O'Brien 6 11 2 P Brennan
3 3-3U BENBECULA (15) N Mitchell 5 11 2 D Crosse
4 6-3505 BERKELEY AVENUE (16) W Greatrex 5 11 2 W Featherstone (10)
5 64F039 GIFTED LEADER (USA) (19) (D) I Williams 11 2 Will Kennedy
6 0650/1 GREEN BELT ELITE (FR) (15) (D) Miss V Williams 10 11 2 A Coleman
7 /P-5PP MY TENT OR YOURS (IRE) (52) (CD) N Henderson 7 11 2A P McCoy
8 121-11 O'CALLAGHAN STRAND (AUS) (74) Jonjo O'Neill 8 11 2 Patrick Cowley (10)
9 15-352 PROMPTER (8) Jonjo O'Neill 7 11 2 R McLernon
10 2-323P RANJAAN (FR) (16) (CD) P Nicholls 6 11 2 H Derham (5)
11 00-162 RIGHT STEP (36) (CD) P Phelan 7 11 2 P Bradley (10)
12 10/455 SEVENTH SKY (GER) (51) C Mann 7 11 2 M Grant
13 24-200 TOM WADE (IRE) (14) (D) S A Harris 7 11 2 B Posts (5)
14 121606 VALID REASON (F24) D Ivory 7 11 2 P Moloney
15 4P-200 DISPOUR (IRE) (64) (D) D McCann 4 10 7 J Maguire
16 1214 BETTING: 1-2 My Tent Or Yours, 10-1 Ranjaan, 14-1 Dispour, 16-1 Capellanus, Prompter, Seventh Sky, 25-1 Ballygrooby Bertie, Valid Reason, Gifted Leader, Green Belt Elite, O'Callaghan Strand, 33-1 others.

5.10 KEMPTON FOR WEDDINGS 'JUMPERS' BUMPER' NH FLAT RACE (CLASS 4). £5,000 added 5YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £3,249.

BETTING: 5-1 Tanks For That, 6-1 Domtaine, 7-1 Stopped Out, 8-1 First Fandango, All That Remains, Tzora, 10-1 Oscar Prairie, 12-1 Golden Gael, 14-1 others.

Thunder set to strike at Rasen

RUMBLE Of Thunder can storm to victory for trainer Philip Kirby at Market Rasen on Sunday.

The eight-year-old heads to the Lincolnshire venue for the 1st Security Solutions Handicap Hurdle on the back of a good victory at Musselburgh earlier this month, where he accounted for Sud Pacific by two lengths.

Rumble Of Thunder should be able to cope with a 4lb rise for that triumph and is taken to go in again.

His case is also strengthened by the fact he has winning form in testing conditions.

Jonjo O'Neill's runners are always worth a second look in Lincolnshire and Deadly Sting is an interesting proposition in the Watch Racing UK On Sky 432 Novices' Hurdle.

The five-year-old held Bally Braes by a head as the pair drew 38 lengths clear of the opposition in a bumper at Aintree in October.

In what does not look an especially strong race, he should be of some interest here if able to translate that form across to the hurdling ranks.

My Tent Or Yours is the star attraction on Kempton's 'jumpers' bumpers' card as he warms up for a crack at the Stan James Champion Hurdle.

Nicky Henderson's ace, who was last seen winning the Christmas Hurdle on this course, should not disappoint in the kempton.co.uk "jumpers' bumper" National Hunt Flat Race. He escapes any penalties for his Grade One-winning exploits over obstacles and Henderson's decision to swerve gruelling slogs in some of the recognised trials for the two-mile crown looks to have worked out.

Notoriously the type to get very fresh at home, he ought to get the perfect workout around the Sunbury venue.

Stablemate Stand To Reason should also go well in division two of the Kempton Park Chase Day 22.02.14 "Jumpers' Bumper" National Hunt Flat Race.

Although the six-year-old chestnut was never really a factor in a Grade Two at Haydock last time, he had looked pretty progressive over hurdles at Newbury and Wincanton in December.

Rated in the mid-90s in the Flat, he might be an ideal sort for

races of this calibre.

Lots of attention on a cracking card at Navan will surround Dunguib in the Ladbrokes Boyne Hurdle.

Once the darling of the Irish scene on the back of his never-to-be-forgotten Champion Bumper success, injury has plagued Philip Fenton's star, robbing him of his best years and also a chance at trying fences.

But he did return from nearly three years off to run really well at Naas last month, and could well find this first try at two miles and five furlongs just what he wants these days. Testing ground should be no problem.

SELECTIONS:
KEMPTON: 1.30 Swincombe Star, 2.00 Bennachie, 2.30 Dunguib, 3.35 Silsol, 4.05 Stand To Reason, 4.40 My Tent Or Yours, 5.10 Divine Intervention.
MARKET RASEN: 1.50 Deadly Sting, 2.20 King Zeal, 2.50 RUMBLE OF THUNDER (NAP), 3.20 Certification, 3.55 Theatrebar, 4.30 Midnight Request, 5.00 Monbeg Theatre.
NAVAN: 1.40 Iris Meain, 2.10 Dunguib, 2.40 Daenkings, 3.10 Bright New Dawn, 3.45 Foxrock, 4.20 Court Jester, 4.50 Lord Scoundrel.
DOUBLE: Rumble Of Thunder and Stand To Reason.



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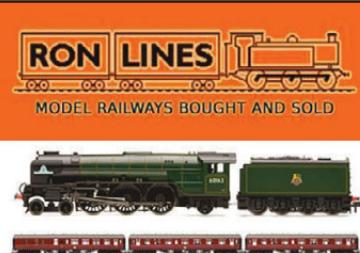
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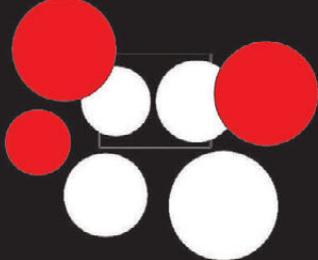
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